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OUTLINES.

I LOV'D SHAKESPEARE AND DO HONOUR HIS MEMORY, ON THIS SIDE IDOLATRY, AS MUCH AS ANY. HE WAS, INDEED, HONEST, AND OF AN OPEN AND FREE NATURE; HAD AN EXCELLENT FANCY, BRAVE NOTIONS AND GENTLE EXPRESSIONS.

BEN JONSON.

OUTLINES

OF THE

LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE.

BY

J. O. HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS, F.R.S.,
F.S.A., Hon. M.R.S.L., Hon. M.R.I.A.

ELEVENTH IMPRESSION.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought.
—*The Thirtieth Sonnet.*

VOLUME THE FIRST.

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NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA.
1907.

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The Shakespeare Society of New York.

APPLETON MORGAN,
PRESIDENT.

WILLIAM H. FLEMING,
SECRETARY.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
21, PARK ROW, NEW YORK,
December 19th, 1889.

MESSRS. LONGMANS, GREEN & CO., London and New York.

GENTLEMEN,

By direction of the Shakespeare Society of New York, I am authorised to advise you that you have the Perpetual License of the Society to use, in the preparation of all forthcoming editions of the OUTLINES OF THE LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE, *the wood blocks and electros of wood blocks which the late J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, Esq., left by Will to the Shakespeare Society of New York.*

I am, Gentlemen

Yours very respectfully,

APPLETON MORGAN,

President.

PREFACE.

The remains of New Place, a partial sketch of which is engraved on the opposite leaf, are typical of the fragments of the personal history of Shakespeare which have hitherto been discovered. In this respect the great dramatist participates in the fate of most of his literary contemporaries, for if a collection of the known facts relating to all of them were tabularly arranged, it would be found that the number of the ascertained particulars of his life reached at least the average. At the present day, with biography carried to a wasteful and ridiculous excess, and Shakespeare the idol not merely of a nation but of the educated world, it is difficult to realize a period when no interest was taken in the events of the lives of authors, and when the great poet himself, notwithstanding the immense popularity of some of his works, was held in no general reverence. It must be borne in mind that actors then occupied an inferior position in society, and that in many quarters even the vocation of a dramatic writer was considered scarcely respectable. The intelligent appreciation of genius by individuals was not sufficient to neutralize in these matters the effect of public opinion and the animosity of the religious world; all circumstances thus uniting to banish general interest in the history of persons connected in any way with the

stage. This biographical indifference continued for many years, and long before the season arrived for a real curiosity to be taken in the subject, the records from which alone a satisfactory memoir could have been constructed had disappeared. At the time of Shakespeare's decease, non-political correspondence was rarely preserved, elaborate diaries were not the fashion, and no one, excepting in semi-apocryphal collections of jests, thought it worth while to record many of the sayings and doings, or to delineate at any length the characters, of actors and dramatists, so that it is generally by the merest accident that particulars of interest respecting them have been recovered.

In the absence of some very important and unexpected discovery, the general desire to penetrate the mystery which surrounds the personal history of Shakespeare cannot be wholly gratified. Something, however, may be accomplished in that direction by a diligent and critical study of the materials now accessible, especially if determined care be taken to avoid the temptation of endeavouring to illustrate that history by his writings, or to decipher his character or sensibilities through their media. It is the more important to insist upon the latter conditions as necessary preliminaries, for so vivid is often the earnestness which he throws into the spirit of a character that it would occasionally be all but impossible, unless a vigilant guard is entertained against such a fallacy, to doubt that what we read was not a purely intellectual emanation. "A man's poetry," however, observes the greatest of modern bards, "has no more to do with the every-day individual than inspiration with the Pythoness when removed from the tripod." Shakespeare's could have been no exception, for it must surely be admitted that the exchange of the

individuality of the man for that of the author is the very essence of dramatic genius, and, if that be so, the higher the genius the more complete will be the severance from the personality. The greatest of dramatists must necessarily be the least egotistical, one of his profoundest achievements being, by rapid permutations of thought and feeling, to identify himself for the moment with the inner consciousness of each person appearing on the scene. In the course of that mental process he is constantly embodying passions which are not only utterly at variance with his own disposition, but altogether foreign to his experiences. It is, therefore, clearly hazardous, and a mere effort of conjecture or fancy, to attempt to infer, from any delineated passion or humour, either the writer's own temperament or his emotions at or about the period 1
of composition. The intelligence which so rapidly converted the dull pages of a novel or history into an imperishable drama was transmuted into other forces in actual life, as may be gathered even from the scanty records of the poet's biography that still remain. From those evidences may perhaps also be gathered some little of his mental apart from his outward nature, but it is not likely that more of the former will ever be disclosed. Before isolated sentiments in his dramas could, in the absence of direct evidence, be plausibly appropriated in that direction, it would have to be proved that, no matter how far their admission was sanctioned by the conventional licence of the ancient stage, they were unnaturally introduced into the mouths of the speakers. The like may be more emphatically asserted in reference to presumed consecutive revelations, the acceptance of which is obviously incompatible with the general belief that he consistently preserved a fidelity to nature in all 243

his creations. A similar objection would apply, though perhaps not so distinctly, to the various theories which, in one way or other, involve the assumption that the freedom of his invention was regulated in uniform measures by the tone of his own spiritual temperament. All such notions are inconsistent with the perfect unity
215 and harmony of the dramatic art; and, in the following pages, excepting where there are either indications of knowledge or allusions to contemporary events, no biographical use will be made of any of the plays.

Amongst the other, that is to say, the non-dramatic works of Shakespeare, there are only the Sonnets which can be supposed to be of assistance to the biographer. For reasons hereafter given the latter will be accepted as entirely impersonal. Excluding, therefore, all reliance upon fanciful theories of any kind respecting the great dramatist, it is proposed to construct, in plain and
23 unobtrusive language, a sketch of his personal history strictly out of evidences and deductions from them. Subtle and gratuitous assumptions of unsupported possibilities will be rigidly excluded, and no conjectures admitted that are not practically removed out of that category by being in themselves reasonable inferences from concurrent facts. Guided by this system, it follows, as a matter of course, that precedence will be always given to early testimonies over the discretionary views of later theorists, no matter how plausible or how ably sustained those views may be. And it may be as well to add, the design being exclusively biographical, that no kind of evidence bearing date subsequently to the twenty-third day of April, 1616, will be admitted, unless there is either a certainty or a reasonable probability that it refers to, or is illustrative of, some event that happened, or of

some position that existed, on or before that day, in connection with the main objects of enquiry.

The evidences accessible to the biographer form naturally two divisions, the contemporary and the traditional, the one differing widely from the other in perceptible and literal validity. The former, amongst which may be included all notices written by personal friends of the great dramatist, rarely include statements that are open to doubt or to a variety of interpretations. Far different is the case with the traditions, scarcely one of which can be accepted without patient investigation, and a few so apparently improbable that they are apt to be hastily rejected as unworthy of serious discussion. The latter is much too frequently the treatment extended to these hearsay records, but it is one highly favoured by numerous critics of the present day who, guided by some mysterious instinct, assume to have a more intimate knowledge of Shakespeare's personal history than was vouchsafed to the ancient inhabitants of his own native town. In the hope of arresting this tendency towards the indiscriminate expulsion of the traditional stories, and of showing that they are at least deserving of a careful examination, the following observations on a few of the most important are submitted to the judgment of the impartial reader.

The earliest recorded traditions at present known are those imbedded in a closely written memoranda-book compiled in the year 1662 by the Rev. John Ward, M.A. of Oxford, and vicar of Stratford-on-Avon. Although this person had then settled only recently in the town, his induction to the living having occurred in the same year, there can be no reasonable doubt that he has accurately repeated the prevalent local gossip in the

few entries respecting the great dramatist. The same observation cannot unfortunately be thought to hold good in respect to the next reporter, John Aubrey, who, about the same period, visited Stratford-on-Avon in one of his equestrian journeys. This industrious antiquary was the author of numerous little biographies, which are here and there disfigured by such palpable or ascertained blunders, that it would appear that he must have been in the habit of compiling from imperfect notes of conversations, or, no doubt in many instances, from his own recollections of them. He was unfortunately also one of those foolish and detestable gossips who record everything that they hear or misinterpret, and this without so much as giving a thought to the damage that they may inflict upon the reputation of their victims. It would, therefore, be hazardous as a rule to depend upon his statements in the absence of corroborative evidence, but we may at the same time in a great measure rely upon the accuracy of main facts in those cases in which there is too much elaboration for his memory to have been entirely at fault. We need not, for instance, give credence to his assertion that Shakespeare's father was a butcher, in the literal sense of that term, but it is scarcely possible that he would have given the story about the calf if he had not been told that the poet himself had followed the occupation. In the same way, although it is obvious that the anecdote respecting the constable is incorrectly narrated, no one should hesitate at accepting for truth the circumstance that Shakespeare occasionally rested at Grendon Underwood in taking the Aylesbury route in his journeys between his native town and the metropolis. Very meagre indeed are the fragments of information to be safely collected from Aubrey, but every word in the next traditional narrative is to be received

with respect as a faithful record of the local belief. That account is preserved in minutes respecting Shakespeare which were compiled by a traveller who paid a visit to the Church of Stratford-on-Avon in the year 1693. His informant was one William Castle, then the parish-clerk and sexton, a person who could have had no motive for exercising deception in such matters. The day had not arrived, at least to a rustic guide, for an attempt to set out dramatic eminence in bolder relief by an intentional exaggeration of early troubles; and the main facts of the poet's Stratford life would, moreover, have been clearly known in that town all through the seventeenth century. 6
About the same time that Castle's observations were registered, a Gloucestershire clergyman, the Rev. Richard Davies, rector of Sapperton, who owned a manuscript biographical dictionary, added therein a few notes to the life of the great dramatist, nearly all of which were clearly derived from oral sources. In this case also there is no pretence for a suspicion that the hearsay testimonies have been garbled or in any way falsified. The inaccuracies observable in the allusions to Sir Thomas Lucy merely show that the writer had but a hazy recollection of the comedy of the Merry Wives of Windsor, not that he had been misinformed respecting the current notion of the poet's early indiscretions.

There is not one of the manuscripts above named which can be fairly described as yielding more than small collections of brief memoranda. A similar observation will apply to the printed notices of the latter half of the 7
seventeenth century, which include very little that belongs to tradition and not much else of importance. Seventy or eighty years were suffered to elapse from the death of the poet before any one seriously undertook to gather the

materials that were necessary for the construction of a substantial biography. The exact period is not known, but most likely at some time about the year 1690, Thomas
8 Betterton, the most celebrated Shakespearean actor of that day, paid a visit to Warwickshire with the express object of ascertaining what could be there learnt respecting the personal history of the great dramatist. The particulars that he managed to glean upon this occasion were afterwards communicated by him to his friend Nicholas
119 Rowe, a well-known dramatist, and some of them were incorporated by the latter into an account that was published in 1709. "I must own," observes Rowe, in speaking of Betterton, "a particular obligation to him for the most considerable part of the passages relating to his life which I have here transmitted to the public, his veneration for the memory of Shakespeare having engaged him to make a journey into Warwickshire on purpose to gather up what remains he could of a name for which he had so great a value." We are indebted to this enthusiasm for the rescue of several valuable fragments which would otherwise have been lost; and no sufficient reason has yet been given for impugning Rowe's general accuracy. There are, indeed, a few errors in the minor details of his biographical sketch, but that he drew it up mainly from reliable sources is unquestionable. An evidence of the latter opinion will be noticed in the remarkable manner in which two at least of his traditional notices,—those which refer to the embarrassed circumstances of John Shakespeare, and to the name of Oldcastle,—have been verified by modern research; while there are several allusions which indicate that the whole is the result of original enquiry. That he exercised also unusual caution in dealing with his materials is obvious

from the prelude to the Southampton anecdote, as well as from the hesitating manner in which he introduces many of his statements. It is scarcely necessary to observe that this prudence has added immeasurably to his credibility, and rendered every word of his essay deserving of respectful attention.

There are many who question the value of the stray morsels collected by Betterton and others in the seventeenth century. The main external argument brought forward in support of their incredulity is the late period at which the traditions have been recorded. Thus it is said, and with truth, that there is no intimation of the poet having followed the trade of a butcher until nearly a century afterwards, that the poaching exploit remained unnoticed for a still longer time, and so on; these long terms of silence being, it is considered, fatal to a dependence upon such testimonies. But it appears to be overlooked that the Stratford biographical notices, unless we adopt the incredible theory that they were altogether gratuitous and foolish inventions, were in all probability mere repetitions of gossip belonging to a much earlier period. This gossip, it must be remembered, was of a character that was seldom jotted down, and that still more rarely found its way into print. Independently even of these considerations, the above line of argument, however plausible, will not bear the test of impartial examination. It would apply very well to the present age, when incessant locomotion and the reign of newspapers have banished the old habit of reliance upon hearsay for intelligence or for a continuity in the recollection of minor events. The case was very different indeed in the country towns and villages of bygone days, when reading of any kind was the luxury of

the few, and intercommunication exceedingly restricted. It may be confidently asserted that, previously to the time of Rowe, books or journals were very rarely to be met with at Stratford-on-Avon, while the large majority of the inhabitants had never in their lives travelled beyond twenty or thirty miles from their homes. There was in fact a conversational and stagnant, not a reading or a travelling, population; and this state of things continued, with gradual but almost imperceptible advances in the latter directions, until the development of the railway system. The oral history of local affairs thus became in former days imprisoned, as it were, in the districts of their occurrence; and it is accordingly found that, in some cases, provincial incidents have been handed down through successive generations with an accuracy that is truly marvellous. There has been, for example, a tradition current at Worcester from time immemorial that a robber of the sanctus-bell was flayed, and his skin nailed to one of the doors of the cathedral. This is a species of barbarity that must be assigned to a very remote period, and yet the fact of its perpetration has been established in recent years by a scientific analysis of fragments hanging to an ancient door which is still preserved in the crypt. Other instances nearly as curious might be adduced, including the verification, already mentioned, of one of Rowe's statements that was first given by him from an oral source a hundred and thirty years after the period to which it refers. These concordances naturally suggest a pause before the exclusion of country traditions on the ground of recency, but of course the nearer their promulgation reaches to our own times the greater should be the caution exercised in their acceptance.

The London traditions, which were subjected through a long series of years to very different influences, do not merit the same degree of consideration. The violent disruption of the theatrical world in the middle of the seventeenth century was attended with the loss of nearly all its original character, and at the creation of a new stage there was retained little beyond fragmentary recollections of the old. It has been clearly ascertained that even Dryden had a very imperfect knowledge of the history of the latter, and there is nothing to indicate that he cared to gather any particulars respecting the life of the great dramatist. Very few indeed there must have been in the Restoration period who took a sincere interest in the subject,—not any, so far as we know, excepting Davenant and Betterton. The best of the metropolitan reports are traceable to the latter, most of the others that were recorded after his death in 1710 being exceedingly meagre and unsatisfactory. In the compilation of the following pages it has, therefore, been thought advisable, in estimating the authority of the various traditions, to give the preference, wherever selection was necessary, to the rural versions. It may also be observed that great reliance has been placed on the general credibility of those anecdotes, whether gleaned from London or the provinces, that include references to facts or conditions which have been verified by modern enquiry, but which could only have been known to the narrators through hearsay.

The literary history of Shakespeare cannot of course be perfected until the order in which he composed his works has been ascertained, but, unless the books of the theatrical managers or licensers of the time are discovered, it is not likely that the exact chronological arrangement

will be determined. The dates of some of his productions rest on positive testimony or distinct allusions, and these are stand-points of great value. In respect, however, to the majority of them, the period of composition has unfortunately been merely the subject of refined and useless conjecture. Internal evidences of construction and style, obscure contemporary references, and metrical
251 or grammatical tests, can very rarely in themselves be relied upon to establish the year of authorship. Specific phases of style or metre necessarily had periods of commencement in Shakespeare's work, but, so long as
252 most of those epochs are merely conjectural, little real progress is made in the enquiry. No sufficient allowances appear to be made for the high probability of the intermittent use of various styles during the long interval which elapsed after the era of comparative immaturity had passed away, and in which, so far as constructive and delineative power was concerned, there was neither progress nor retrogression. Shakespeare's genius arrived
203 at maturity with such celerity that it is perilous to assert, from any kind of internal evidence alone, what he could not have written at any particular subsequent period, and dramatic style frequently varies not only with the subject of the adopted narrative, but with the purpose of authorship. It may be presumed, for instance, that the diction and construction of a drama written with a view to its performance at the Court might be essentially dissimilar from those of a play of the same date composed merely for the ordinary stage, where the audiences were of a more promiscuous character and the usages and appliances of the actors in some respects of a different nature. Nor have the various theories that are found in æsthetic
2 criticism, those by which the gradation of the author's

mental changes is sought to be established, landed us in greater certainty. The subject of the chronological order is one, indeed, solely of a biographical curiosity that can only be legitimately gratified by the discovery of contemporary evidence. Even with such assistance, the mere facts of that order would be nearly all that could be elicited, for critics of later days might as wisely think of stretching their hands to the firmament as dream of the advent of an intellectual power adequate to grasp the definite history of Shakespeare's mind. 237 3 391

It will thus be seen that, no matter what pains a biographer may take to furnish his store, the result will not present a more brilliant appearance than did the needy shop of Romeo's apothecary. He is baffled in every quarter by the want of graphical documents, and little more can be accomplished beyond a very imperfect sketch or outline of the material features of the poet's career. It is not likely that much beyond this will ever be revealed, but so vivid is the general interest enforced by the publication of the minutest new fact respecting the world's greatest author, this unsatisfactory position hardly suffices to account for an inclination which is not unfrequently manifested for the obliteration of the little that is known, and for the establishment of a mythical Shakespeare. Such an inclination may sometimes arise from a reluctance to believe that the object of our idolatry could ever have been human, or from a vague fancy that our ideal of his marvellous creations is tainted by a knowledge of the prosaic events of his life, but no doubt, as a rule, from an aversion to the thoughtless dissemination of injurious gossip, repeated year after year without a diligent investigation of its credibility, and disturbing an instinct which tells us that something

of worth will be lost if it cannot be conscientiously inferred from the records that our national dramatist fully deserved the endearing tributes of Ben Jonson,—if we cannot entertain an affectionate idea of the man as well as a reverence for his genius. It is not as if a refutation of the slanders that have been so widely circulated was an impossibility. It assuredly is not, and herein lies the vindication for the study of his biography. It need not be pursued in a spirit of advocacy, nor under the delusion that Shakespeare's transcendent intellect excluded the admission of personal frailty, but it may and should be with the conviction that the pervading amiability of his nature is established on an irrefragable testimony that can only be affected by other evidences when the true significance of the latter is misinterpreted.

The inclination to question the expediency of studying the poet's biography is generally accompanied by a contempt for his memorials. Should we appreciate the Iliad the more, it is asked, if we chanced to discover the birth-place of Homer? Will a visit to Stratford-on-Avon bring us nearer to a perfect knowledge of Hamlet? No more flowers are to be strewn on the grave;—they will be useful for the decoration of our tables. It is enough that we enjoy the magnificent inheritance bequeathed to us by the sons of Song;—we need not care to honour or to guard the names of the testators. These, however, are not the sentiments of the public, who virtually denounce them by flocking, in annually increasing thousands, to pay homage at the shrine of the national dramatist; and many not ashamed to indulge the fancy that the gentle spirit may yet occasionally hover amidst the scenes that he loved so well on earth.

It only remains to add, in conclusion, that the principal design of this work is to furnish the reader with an authentic collection of all the known facts respecting the personal and literary history of the great dramatist. There is, it is true, an attempt, in the biographical essay which forms the text, to give a consecutive narrative founded on my own interpretation of the various testimonies; but depositions of the witnesses are delivered at the termination of the summing-up, and each issue is left to the decision of the jury of students. I have no favourite theories to advocate, no wild conjectures to drag into 307
a temporary existence, and no bias save one inspired by the hope that Shakespearean discussions may be controlled by submission to the authority of practical evidences. The collection of these evidences is the chief 393
pursuit, or rather the leading hobby, of my declining years. No journey is too long, no trouble too great, if there is a possibility of either resulting in the discovery of the minutest scrap of information respecting the life of our national poet, or of materials that throw light upon the contemporary drama and the usages of the ancient stage. And let me acknowledge, with every sentiment of gratitude, how essentially my labours are facilitated and cheered by the kind and ready liberality with which private and other libraries, family archives, municipal 392
records and official collections, are being made accessible.

Hollingbury Copse, Brighton.
March, 1884.

MEMORANDUM.

The additional matter which is introduced into this, the seventh edition of the present work, may, it is hoped, render it more useful to the student.

It is scarcely necessary to observe that, however great may be the care taken to avoid them, errors must inevitably occur in a work that exacts so great a variety of research in its several details. The only possibility of eliminating them is through the concurrent aid of my fellow-students, for an oversight which is immediately detected by one reader frequently continues to pass unnoticed year after year by another. A great favour would be conferred by assistance in this direction, and it would be acknowledged with that gratitude which at present is restricted to the Rev. H. P. Stokes, Mr. J. Challenor Smith, Mr. Herbert A. Evans, and Dr. Ingleby in this country, and to Mr. William J. Rolfe of Boston, U.S., all of whom have kindly furnished me with substantial corrections.

Hollingbury Copse,
Brighton, England.
March, 1887.

PREMONITORY NOTES.

The significance of much that is adduced in the following pages will not be appreciated without a continual reference to the probable worth of money in the time of the poet. The estimate of the difference between its value at that period and at our own cannot be accurately calculated, the purchasing ability in the earlier days varying considerably both with locality and object, and there having been a variety of complex influences that renders an exact determination of those values an impossibility; but, in balancing the Shakespearean and present currencies, the former may be roughly estimated from a twelfth to a twentieth of the latter in money, and from a twentieth to a thirtieth in landed or house property. Even these scales may be deceptively in favour of the older values, there having been, in Shakespeare's days, a relative and often a fictitious importance attached to the precious metals, arising from their comparative scarcity and the limited appliances for dispensing with their use.

It will be useful also to be constantly bearing in mind the difference between the Old and New Styles. According to the former, the one which of course prevailed during the whole of the Shakespearean period, each month commenced ten days later than it does at the present time. It is especially important that this variation should be recollected in the consideration of all that relates to the country and to rural life. 308

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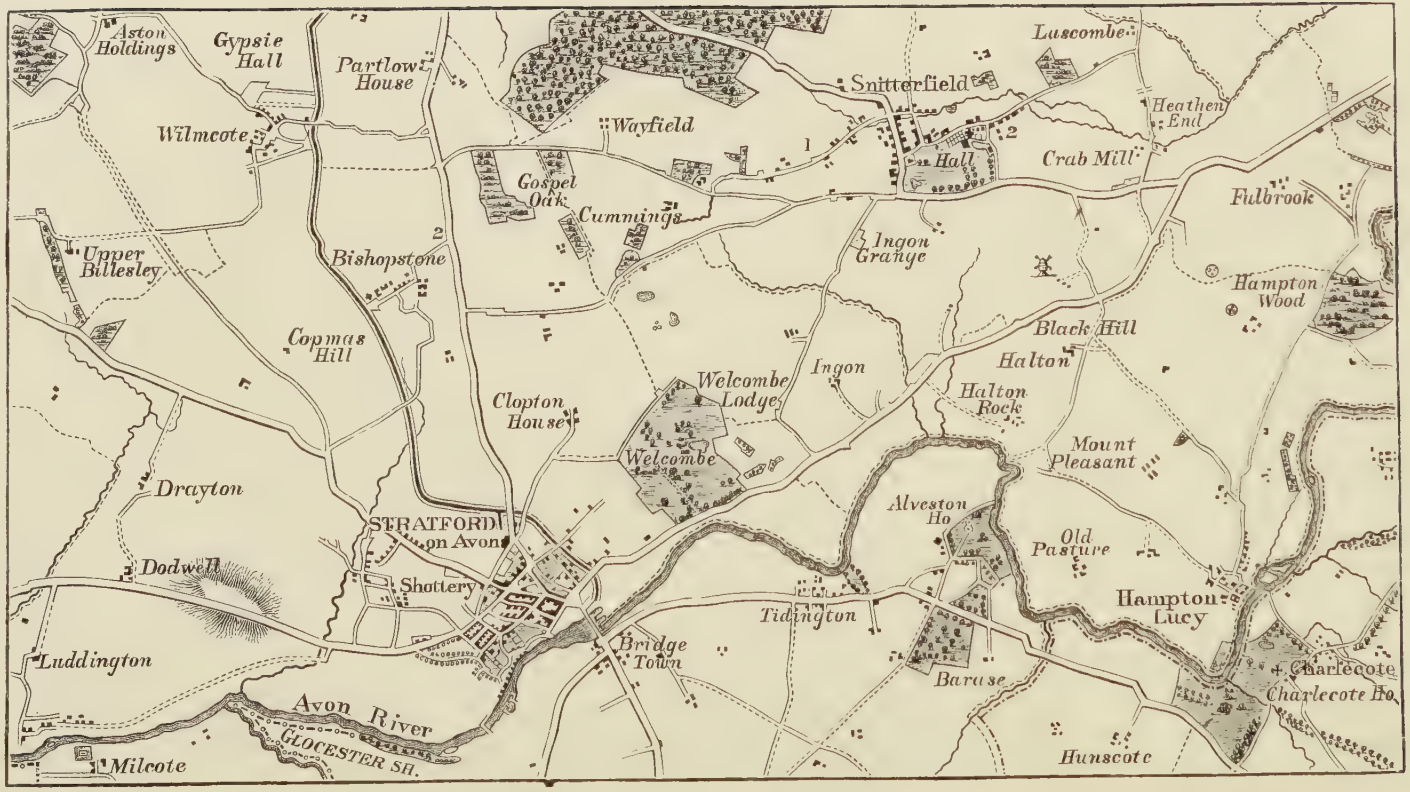
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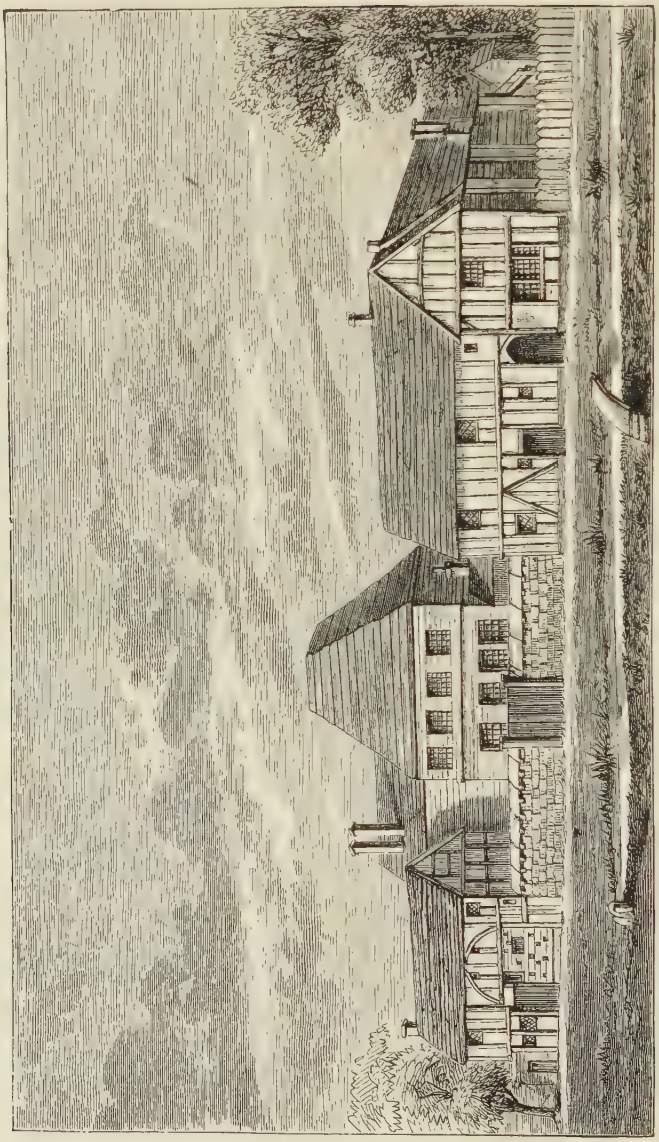
Avon River
GLOCESTER SH.
Milcote
Hunscote

OUTLINES.

In the reign of King Edward the Sixth there lived in Warwickshire a farmer named Richard Shakespeare, who rented a messuage and a considerable quantity of land at Snitterfield, an obscure village in that county. He had two sons, one of whom, named Henry, continued throughout his life to reside in the same parish. John, the other son, left his father's home about the year 1551, and, shortly afterwards, is found residing in the neighbouring and comparatively large borough of Stratford-on-Avon, in the locality which has been known from the middle ages to the present day as Henley Street, so called from its being the terminus of the road from Henley-in-Arden, a market-town about eight miles distant.

At this period, and for many generations afterwards, the sanitary condition of the thoroughfares of Stratford-on-Avon was, to our present notions, simply terrible. Under-surface drainage of every kind was then an unknown art in the district. There was a far greater extent of moisture in the land than would now be thought possible, and streamlets of a water-power sufficient for the operations of corn-mills meandered through the town. This general humidity intensified the evils arising from the want of scavengers, or other effective appliances for



THE ROTHER MARKET AND ITS STREAMLET, FROM A SKETCH TAKEN ABOUT THE YEAR 1780.

the preservation of cleanliness. House-slops were recklessly thrown into ill-kept channels that lined the sides of unmetalled roads; pigs and geese too often revelled in the puddles and ruts; while here and there small middens were ever in the course of accumulation, the receptacles of offal and every species of nastiness. A regulation for the removal of these collections to certain specified localities interspersed through the borough, and known as common dung-hills, appears to have been the extent of the interference that the authorities ventured or cared to exercise in such matters. Sometimes, when the nuisance was thought to be sufficiently flagrant, they made a raid on those inhabitants who had suffered their refuse to accumulate largely in the highways. On one of these occasions, in April, 1552, John Shakespeare was amerced in the sum of twelve-pence for having amassed what was no doubt a conspicuous *sterquinarium* before his house in Henley Street, and under these unsavoury circumstances does the history of the poet's father commence in the records of England. But although there was little excuse for his negligence, one of the public stores of filth being within a stone's throw of his residence, all that can be said to his disparagement is that he was not in advance of his neighbours in such matters, two of whom were coincidently fined for the same offence.

For some years subsequently to this period, John Shakespeare was a humble tradesman at Stratford-on-Avon, holding no conspicuous position in the town; yet still he must have been tolerably successful in business, 309
for in October, 1556, he purchased two small freehold estates, one being the building in Henley Street annexed to that which is now shown as the Birth-Place, and the other situated in Greenhill Street, a road afterwards called

More Towns End. In the year 1557, however, his for-
tunes underwent an important change through an alliance 310
with Mary, the youngest and fondly-loved daughter of 318
Robert Arden, a wealthy farmer of Wilmecote, near
Stratford-on-Avon, who had died a few months pre-
viously. A wealthy farmer, indeed, for those days, and 311
one who would have been specially so distinguished in
the contemporary provincial estimate. He possessed
two farm-houses with a hundred acres or more of land at
Snitterfield, as well as another one with about fifty acres 312
at Wilmecote, the former being occupied by tenants and
the latter by himself. In addition to these he owned a
copyhold estate in the last-named parish, the extent of
which has not been ascertained. But with all these
advantages he was a farmer, and nothing more,—a
worthy fellow whose main anxiety, as fully appears from
the records, centred in the welfare of his family, and
who had no desire to emulate, however remotely, the
position of a county gentleman. The appointments of
his dwelling were probably, however, superior on the
whole to those which were to be found in other resi-
dences of the same class, including no fewer than eleven
painted-cloths, a species of artistic decoration that was in
those days a favourite substitute for the more expensive
tapestry. Pictures of the kind that are now familiar to
us were then very rarely indeed to be seen, excepting in
palaces or in the larger mansions of the nobility. These
painted-cloths were generally formed of canvas upon
which were depicted the Seven Ages of Man, the Story
of the Prodigal, and such like; grotesque accompaniments,
in one or more of the rooms, to the "bacon in the roof."

The inventory of Robert Arden's goods, which was
taken shortly after his death in 1556, enables us to

realize the kind of life that was followed by the poet's
313 mother during her girlhood. In the total absence of books or means of intellectual education, her acquirements must have been restricted to an experimental knowledge of matters connected with the farm and its house. There can be no doubt that the maiden with the pretty name, she who has been so often represented as a nymph of the forest, communing with nothing less æsthetic than a nightingale or a waterfall, spent most of her time in the homeliest of rustic employments; and it is not at all improbable that, in common with many other farmers' daughters of the period, she occasionally assisted in the more robust occupations of the field. It is at all events not very likely that a woman, unendowed with an exceptionally healthy and vigorous frame, could have been the parent of a Shakespeare. Of her personal character or social gifts nothing whatever is known, but it would be a grave error to assume that the rude surroundings of her youth were incompatible with the possession of a romantic temperament and the highest form of subjective refinement. Existence, indeed, was passed in her father's house in some respects, we should now say, rather after the manner of pigs than that of human beings. Many of the articles that are considered necessaries in the humblest of modern cottages were not to be seen,—there were no table-knives, no forks, no crockery. The food was manipulated on flat pieces of stout wood, too insignificant in value to be catalogued, and whatever there may have been to supply the places of spoons or cups were no doubt roughly formed of the same material; but some of the larger objects, such as kitchen-pans, may have been of pewter or latten. The means of ablution were lamentably defective, if, indeed,

they were not limited to what could have been supplied by an insulated pail of water, for what were called towels were merely used for wiping the hands after a meal, and there was not a single wash-hand basin in the esta- 314
blishment. As for the inmate and other labourers, it was very seldom indeed, if ever, that they either washed 315
their hands or combed their hair, nor is there the least reason for suspecting that those accomplishments were in liberal requisition in the dwellings of their employers. But surely there was nothing in all this to have excluded the unlettered damsel from a fervid taste for oral romance, that which was then chiefly represented by tales of the fairies, the knights, or the giants,—nothing to debar the high probability of her recitals of them having fascinated her illustrious son in the days of his childhood,—nothing to disturb the graceful suggestion that some of his impressions of perfect womanhood had their origin in his recollections of the faultless nature of the matron of Henley Street.

The maiden name of Robert Arden's wife has not been discovered, but it is ascertained that he had contracted a second marriage with Agnes Hill, the widow of a substantial farmer of Bearley, and that, in a settlement which 316
was probably made on that occasion, he had reserved to his daughter Mary the reversion to a portion of a large estate at Snitterfield, her step-mother taking only a life-interest. Some part of this land was in the occupation of Richard Shakespeare, the poet's grandfather, whence may have arisen the acquaintanceship between the two families. In addition to this reversion, Mary Arden received, under the provisions of her father's will, not only a handsome pecuniary legacy, but the fee-simple of a valuable property at Wilmecote, the latter, which was

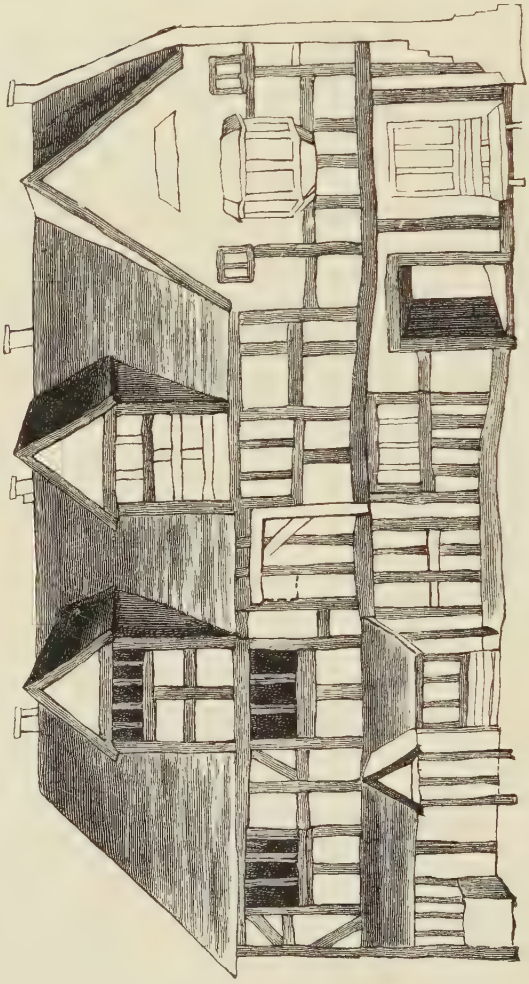
known as Asbies, consisting of a house with nearly sixty acres of land. An estimate of these advantages, viewed relatively to his own position, would no doubt have given John Shakespeare the reputation amongst his neighbours of having married an opulent heiress, his now comparative affluence investing him with no small degree of local importance. His official career at once commenced by his election in 1557 as one of the ale-tasters, an officer appointed for the supervision of malt liquors and bread. About the same time he was received into the Corporation, taking the lowest rank, as was usual with new comers, that of a burgess; and in the September of the following year, 1558, he was appointed one of the four petty constables by a vote of the jury of the Court Leet. He was re-elected to that quaternion on October the sixth, 1559, for another year, and on the same day he was chosen one of the affeerors appointed to determine the fines for those offences which were punishable arbitrarily, and for which no express penalties were prescribed by statute. This latter office he again filled in 1561, when he was elected one of the Chamberlains of the borough, an office that he held for two years, delivering his second account to the Corporation in the first month of 1564.

The ostensible business followed by John Shakespeare
116 was that of a glover, but after his marriage he speculated largely in wool purchased from the neighbouring farmers,
191 and occasionally also dealt in corn and other articles. In those days, especially in small provincial towns, the
192 concentration of several trades into the hands of one person was very usual, and, in many cases, no matter how numerous and complicated were the intermediate processes, the producer of the raw material was frequently

its manufacturer. Thus a glover might, and sometimes did, rear the sheep that furnished him with meat, skins, wool, and leather. Whether John Shakespeare so conducted his business is unknown, but it is certain that in addition to his trade in gloves, which also, as was usual, included the sale of divers articles made of leather, he entered into a variety of other speculations.

In Henley Street, in what was for those days an unusually large and commodious residence for a provincial tradesman, and upon or almost immediately before the twenty-second day of April, 1564, but most probably on that Saturday, the eldest son of John and Mary 202
Shakespeare, he who was afterwards to be the national poet of England, was born. An apartment on the first floor of that house is shown to this day, through unvarying tradition, as the birth-room of the great dramatist, who was baptized on the following Wednesday, April the twenty-sixth, receiving the Christian name of William. He was then, and continued to be for more than two years, an only child, two girls, daughters of the same parents, who were born previously, having died in their infancy.

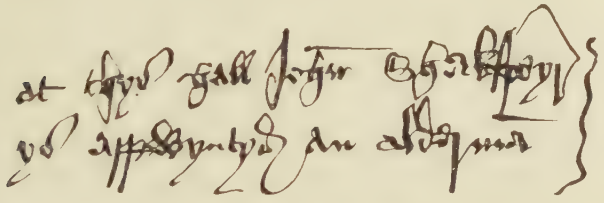
The house in which Shakespeare was born must have been erected in the first half of the sixteenth century, but the alterations that it has since undergone have effaced much of its original character. Inhabited at various periods by tradesmen of different occupations, it could not possibly have endured through the long course of upwards of three centuries without having been subjected to numerous repairs and modifications. The general form and arrangement of the tenement that was purchased in 1556 may yet, however, be distinctly traced, and many of the old timbers, as well as pieces of the ancient rough



THE BIRTH-PLACE IN HENLEY STREET, AS IT APPEARED ABOUT THE YEAR 1762.

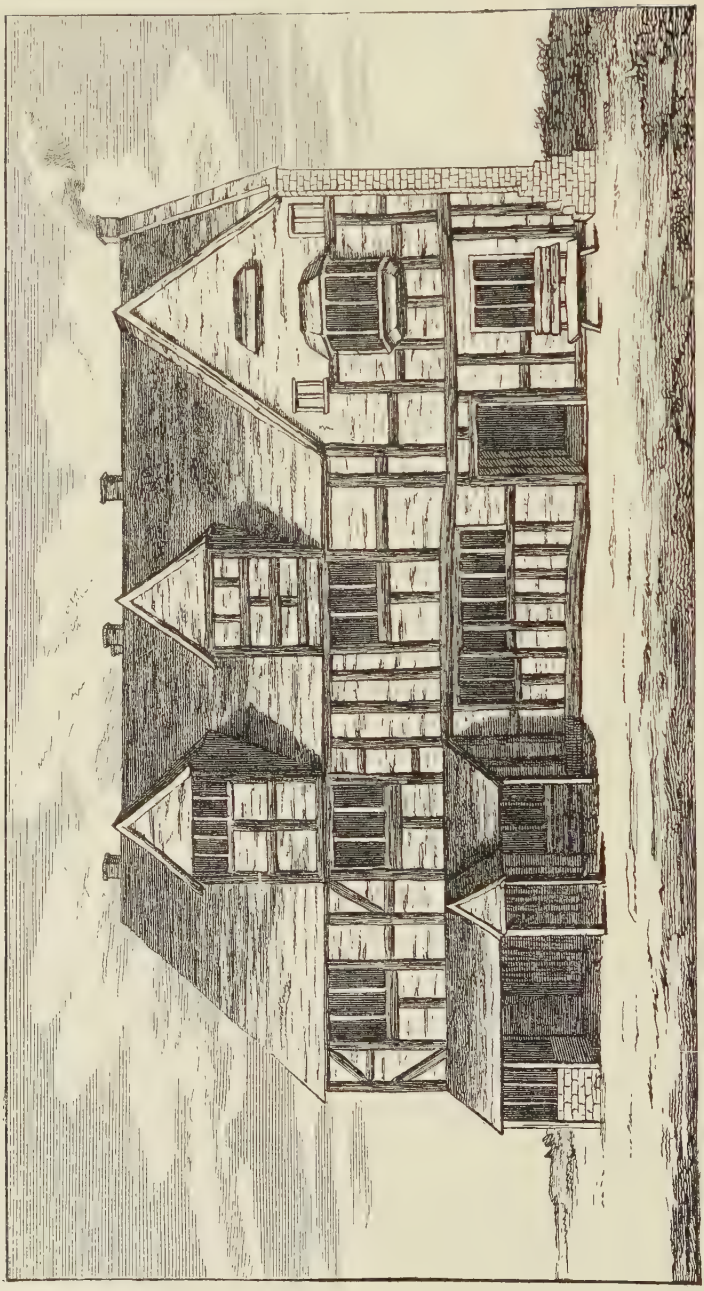
stone-work, still remain. There are also portions of the chimneys, the fire-place surroundings and the stone basement-floor, that have been untouched; but most, if not all, of the lighter wood-work belongs to a more recent period. It may be confidently asserted that there is only one room in the entire building which has not been greatly changed since the days of the poet's boyhood. This is the antique cellar under the sitting-room, from which it is approached by a diminutive flight of steps. It is a very small apartment, measuring only nine by ten feet, but near "that small most greatly liv'd this star of England."

In the July of this year of the poet's birth, 1564, a violent plague, intensified no doubt by sanitary neglect, broke out in the town, but the family in Henley Street



providentially escaped its ravages. John Shakespeare contributed on this occasion fairly, at least, if not liberally, both towards the relief of the poor and of those who were attacked by the epidemic.

In March, 1565, John Shakespeare, with the assistance of his former colleague in the same office, made up the accounts of the Chamberlains of the borough for the year ending at the previous Michaelmas. Neither of these worthies could even write their own names, but nearly 317
all tradesmen then reckoned with counters, the results on important occasions being entered by professional



THE BIRTH-PLACE IN HENLEY STREET, AS IT APPEARED IN THE YEAR 1769.

scriveners. The poet's father seems to have been an adept in the former kind of work, for in February, 1566, having been elected an alderman in the previous summer, he individually superintended the making up of the accounts of the Chamberlains for the preceding official year, at which time he was paid over three pounds, equivalent to more than thirty of present money, that had been owing to him for some time by the Corporation. In the month of October, 1566, another son, who was christened Gilbert on the thirteenth, was born, the poet being then nearly two and a half years old. This Gilbert, 121
who was educated at the Free School, in after life entered into business in London as a haberdasher, returning, however, in the early part of the following century, to his native town, where he is found, in 1602, completing an important legal transaction with which he was entrusted by the great dramatist. His Christian name was probably derived from that of one of his father's neighbours, Gilbert Bradley, who was a glover in Henley Street, residing near the Birth-Place and on the same side of the way.

In September, 1567, Robert Perrot, a brewer, John Shakespeare, and Ralph Cawdrey, a butcher, were nominated for the office of the High Bailiff, or, as that dignitary was subsequently called, the Mayor. The last-named candidate was the one who was elected. It is upon this occasion that the poet's father is alluded to for the first time in the local records as "Mr. Shakspeyr." He had been previously therein mentioned either as John Shakespeare, or briefly as Shakespeare, and the addition of the title was in those days no small indication of an advance in social position. There is, indeed, no doubt that, during the early years of Shakespeare's boyhood,

Facsimiles from the Corporation Accounts that were superintended by the Poet's father and his colleague in the years 1564 *and* 1565.

his father was one of the leading men in Stratford-on-Avon. On the fourth of September, 1568, John Shakespeare,—"Mr. John Shakysper," as he is called in that day's record,—was chosen High Bailiff, attaining thus the most distinguished official position in the town after an active connexion with its affairs during the preceding eleven years. The poet had entered his fifth year in the previous month of April, the family in Henley Street now consisting of his parents, his brother Gilbert, who was very nearly two years old, and himself.

The new religious system was now firmly established at Stratford. Although the churchwardens' accounts are not preserved, and the materials for the local ecclesiastical history are exceedingly scanty, there are entries in the town archives respecting the Guild Chapel which leave 395
no doubt on the subject. The rood-loft is mentioned as having been taken down in the year of the poet's birth, 1564, a number of the images in the building having been previously "defaced," that is to say, at some time between Michaelmas, 1562, and Michaelmas, 1563, John Shakespeare himself having been on the latter occasion one of the chamberlains through whom the expenses of the mutilation were defrayed. Under these circumstances there can be little if any doubt that, at the time of his accession to an office that legally involved the responsibility of taking the oath of supremacy, he had outwardly conformed to the Protestant rule, and there is certainly as little that he was one of the many of those holding a similar position in the Catholic stronghold of Warwickshire who were secretly attached to the old religion. If 397
this had not been the case, it is impossible to believe, no matter how plausible were the explanations that were 396
offered, that his name could, at a subsequent period and

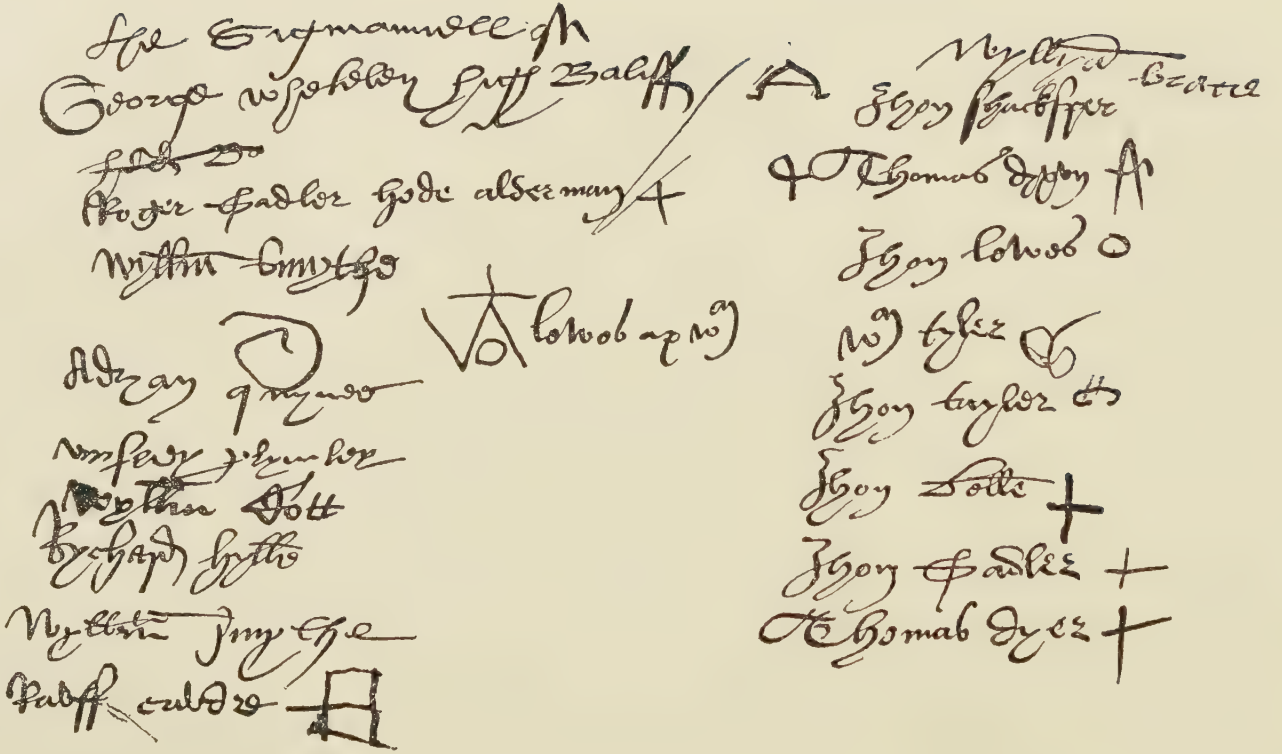
after the great penal legislation of 1581, have been included in more than one list of suspected recusants. For this he has been termed an unconscientious hypocrite, but he shared his dissimulation with myriads of his countrymen, and it is altogether unfair to place an enforced in the same category with a spontaneous insincerity. Some anyhow will be found to say a kind word in excuse for a man who, in times of a virulent and crushing persecution, was unwilling to sacrifice the temporal interests of his wife and children as well as his own on the altar of open non-conformity. It should be added that the vestments belonging to the Church of the Holy Trinity, which had been out of use for some years, were sold by the Corporation in 1571; and these were amongst the last remaining vestiges of a ritual that was not publicly celebrated at Stratford in the life-time of the great dramatist.

It must have been somewhere about this period, 1568, that Shakespeare entered into the mysteries of the horn-book and the A. B. C. Although both his parents were absolutely illiterate, they had the sagacity to appreciate the importance of an education for their son, and the poet, somehow or other, was taught to read and write, the necessary preliminaries to admission into the Free School. There were few persons at that time at Stratford-on-Avon capable of initiating him even into these preparatory accomplishments, but John Shakespeare, in his official position, could hardly have encountered much difficulty in finding a suitable instructor. There was, for instance, Higford, the Steward of the Court of Record, and the person who transcribed some of his accounts when he was the borough Chamberlain; but it is as likely as not that the poet received the first

rudiments of education from older boys who were some way advanced in their school career.

A passion for the drama is with some natures an instinct, and it would appear that the poet's father had an express taste in that direction. At all events, dramatic entertainments are first heard of at Stratford-on-Avon during the year of his bailiffship, and were, it may fairly be presumed, introduced in unison with his wishes as they certainly must have been with his sanction. At some period between Michaelmas, 1568, and the same day in 1569, the Queen's and the Earl of Worcester's players visited the town and gave representations before the Council, the former company receiving nine shillings and the latter twelve pence for their first performances, to which the public were admitted without payment. They doubtlessly gave other theatrical entertainments with stated charges for admission, but there would, of course, be no entries of those performances in the municipal accounts; and sometimes there were bodies of actors in the town to whom the official liberality was not extended. 114
No notice whatever of the latter companies would have been registered.

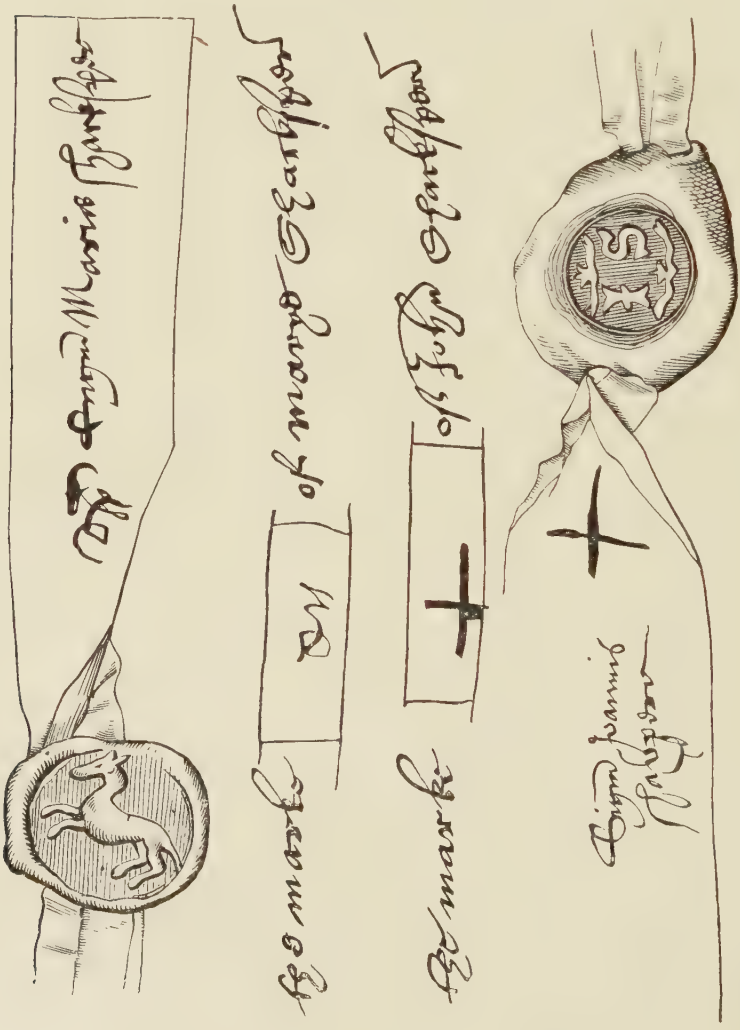
Were it not for the record of a correlative incident, it would have been idle to have hazarded a conjecture on the interesting question,—was the poet, who was then in his fifth or sixth year, a spectator at either of these performances? If, however, it can be shown that, in a neighbouring county about the same time, there was an inhabitant of a city who took his little boy, one born in the same year with Shakespeare, 1564, to a free dramatic entertainment exhibited as were those at Stratford-on-Avon before the Corporation under precisely similar conditions, there then arises a reasonable probability that



we should be justified in giving an affirmative reply to the enquiry. There is such an evidence in the account left by a person of the name of Willis, of "a stage-play which I saw when I was a child," and included by him in a confidential narrative of his moral and religious life, a sort of autobiography, which, in his old age, he addressed to his wife and children.

The curious narrative given by Willis is in the following terms,—"in the city of Gloucester the manner is, as I think it is in other like corporations, that, when players of enterludes come to towne, they first attend the Mayor to enforme him what noble-mans servants they are, and so to get licence for their publike playing; and if the Mayor like the actors, or would shew respect to their lord and master, he appoints them to play their first play before himselfe and the Aldermen and Common Counsell of the city; and that is called the Mayors play, where every one that will comes in without money, the Mayor giving the players a reward as hee thinks fit to shew respect unto them. At such a play my father tooke me with him, and made mee stand betweene his leggs as he sate upon one of the benches, where wee saw and heard very well. The play was called the Cradle of Security, wherin was personated a king or some great prince, with his courtiers of severall kinds, amongst which three ladies were in speciall grace with him; and they, keeping him in delights and pleasures, drew him from his graver counsellors, hearing of sermons and listning to good counsell and admonitions, that, in the end, they got him to lye downe in a cradle upon the stage, where these three ladies, joyning in a sweet song, rocked him asleepe that he snorted againe; and in the meane time closely conveyed under the cloaths wherewithall he was covered

Facsimiles of the mark-signatures used by Shakespeare's parents in the year 1579, *when they executed a deed conveying their interests in two houses in Snitterfield to one Robert Webbe.*



a vizard, like a swine's snout, upon his face, with three wire chaines fastned thereunto, the other end whereof being holden severally by those three ladies who fall to singing againe, and then discovered his face that the spectators might see how they had transformed him, going on with their singing. Whilst all this was acting, there came forth of another doore at the farthest end of the stage two old men, the one in blew with a serjeant-at-armes his mace on his shoulder, the other in red with a drawn sword in his hand and leaning with the other hand upon the others shoulder; and so they two went along in a soft pace round about by the skirt of the stage, till at last they came to the cradle, when all the court was in greatest jollity; and then the foremost old man with his mace stroke a fearfull blow upon the cradle, whereat all the courtiers, with the three ladies and the vizard, all vanished; and the desolate prince starting up bare-faced, and finding himselfe thus sent for to judgement, made a lamentable complaint of his miserable case, and so was carried away by wicked spirits. This prince did personate in the morrall the Wicked of the World; the three ladies, Pride, Covetousnesse and Luxury; the two old men, the End of the World and the Last Judgment. This sight tooke such impression in me that, when I came towards mans estate, it was as fresh in my memory as if I had seen it newly acted," Willis's Mount Tabor or Private Exercises of a Penitent Sinner, published in the yeare of his age 75, anno Dom. 1639, pp. 110-113. Who can be so pitiless to the imagination as not to erase the name of Gloucester in the preceding anecdote, and replace it by that of Stratford-on-Avon?

Homely and rude as such an allegorical drama as the Cradle of Security would now be considered, it was yet

an advance in dramatic construction upon the medieval religious plays generally known as mysteries, which were still in favour with the public and were of an exceedingly primitive description. The latter were, however, put on the stage with far more elaborate appliances, there being no reason for believing that the itinerant platform of the later drama was provided with much beyond a few properties. The theatre of the mysteries consisted of a movable wooden rectangular structure of two rooms one over the other, the lower closed, the upper one, that in which the performances took place, being open at least on one side to the audience. The vehicle itself, every portion of which that was visible to the audience was grotesquely painted, was furnished in the upper room with
84 tapestries that answered the purposes of scenery, and with mechanical appliances for the disposition of the various
85 objects introduced, such as hell-mouth, a favourite property on the ancient English stage. This consisted of a huge face constructed of painted canvas exhibiting glaring eyes and a red nose of enormous dimensions; the whole so contrived with movable jaws of large, projecting teeth, that, when the mouth opened, flames could be seen within the hideous aperture; the fire being probably represented by the skilful management of links or torches held behind the painted canvas. There was frequently at the back of the stage a raised platform to which there was an ascent by steps from the floor of the pageant, and sometimes an important part of the action of the mystery was enacted upon it. Some of the properties, however rude, must have been of large dimensions. They were generally made of wood, which was invariably painted, but some appear to have been constructed of basket-work covered over with painted cloths. The larger ones were cities

with pinnacles and towers, kings' palaces, temples, castles and such like, some probably not very unlike decorated sentry-boxes. Amongst the miscellaneous properties 86
may be named "a rybbe colleryd red," which was no doubt used in the mystery of the Creation. Clouds were represented by painted cloths so contrived that they could open and show angels in the heavens. Horses and other like animals were generally formed with hoops and laths that were wrapped in canvas, the latter being afterwards painted in imitation of nature. Artificial trees were introduced, and so were beds, tombs, pulpits, ships, ladders, and numerous other articles. One of the quaintest contrivances was that which was intended to convey the idea of an earthquake, which seems to have been attempted by means of some mechanism within a barrel. In the lower room, connected with pulleys in the upper part of the pageant, was a windlass used for the purpose of lowering or raising the larger properties, and for various objects for which movable ropes could be employed. Some of the other machinery was evidently of an ingenious character, but its exact nature has not been ascertained.

The costumes of many of the personages in the mysteries were of a grotesque and fanciful description, but in some instances, as in those of Adam and Eve, there was an attempt to make the dresses harmonize with the circumstances of the history. Some writers, interpreting the stage-directions too literally, have asserted that those characters were introduced upon the pageant in a state of nudity. This was certainly not the case. When they were presumed to be destitute of clothing, they appeared in dresses made either of white leather or of flesh-coloured cloths, over which at the proper time

were thrown the garments of skins. There were no doubt some incidents represented in the old English mysteries which would now be considered indecorous, but it should be borne in mind that every age has, within certain limits, its own conventional and frequently irrational sentiments of toleration and propriety. Adam and Eve attired in white leather and personified by men, for actresses were then unknown, scarcely could have realized to the spectator even a generic idea of the nude, but at all events there was nothing in any of the theatrical costumes of the early drama which can be fairly considered to be of an immodest character, although many of them were extravagantly whimsical. Thus Herod was always introduced wearing red gloves, while his clothes and head-gear seem to have been painted or dyed in a variety of colours, so that, as far as costume could assist the deception, he probably appeared, when brandishing his flaming sword, as fierce and hideous a tyrant as could well have been represented. Pontius Pilate was usually enwrapped in a large green cloak, which opened in front to enable him to wield an immense club. The latter was humanely adapted to his strength by the weight being chiefly restricted to that of the outer case, the inside being lightly stuffed with wool. The Devil was another important character, who was also grotesquely arrayed and had a mask or false head which frequently required either mending or painting. Masks were worn by several other personages, though it would appear that in some instances the operation of painting the faces of the actors was substituted. Wigs of false hair, either gilded or of red, yellow, and other colours, were also much in request.

That Shakespeare, in his early youth, witnessed representations of some of these mysteries, cannot admit of

a reasonable doubt; for although the ordinary church-plays were by no means extinct, they survived only in particular localities, and do not appear to have been retained in Stratford or its neighbourhood. The performances which then took place nearly every year at Coventry attracted hosts of spectators from all parts of the country, while, at occasional intervals, the mystery players of that city made theatrical progresses to various other places. It is not known whether they favoured Stratford-on-Avon with a professional visit, but it is not at all improbable that they did, for they must have passed through the town in their way to Bristol, where it is recorded that they gave a performance in the year 1570. 107
Amongst the mysteries probably recollected by Shakespeare was one in which the King was introduced as Herod of Jewry, and in which the children of Bethlehem were barbarously speared, the soldiers disregarding the frantic shrieks of the bereaved mothers. In the collection known as the Coventry Mysteries, a soldier appears before Herod with a child on the end of his spear in evidence of the accomplishment of the King's commands, a scene to be remembered, however rude may have been the property which represented the infant; while the extravagance of rage, which formed one of the then main dramatic characteristics of that sovereign, must have made a deep impression on a youthful spectator. The idea of such a history being susceptible of exaggeration into burlesque never entered a spectator's mind in those days, and the impression made upon him was probably increased by the style of Herod's costume.

Besides the allusions made by the great dramatist to the Herod of the Coventry players, there are indications that other grotesque performers were occasionally in his

recollection, those who with blackened faces acted the parts of the Black Souls. There are several references in Shakespeare to condemned souls being of this colour, and in one place there is an allusion to them in the language of the mysteries. Falstaff is reported to have said of a flea on Bardolph's red nose that "it was a black soul burning in hell;" and, in the Coventry plays, the
91 Black or Damned Souls appeared with sooty faces and attired in a motley costume of yellow and black. It is certainly just possible that the notions of Herod and the Black Souls may have been derived from other sources, but the more natural probability is that they are absolute recollections of the Coventry plays.

The period of Shakespeare's boyhood was also that of what was practically the last era of the real ancient English mystery. There were, it is true, occasional performances of them up to the reign of James the First, but they became obsolete throughout nearly all the country about the year 1580. Previously to the latter date they had for many generations served as media for religious instruction. In days when education of any kind was a rarity, and spiritual religion an impossibility or at least restricted to very few, appeals to the senses in illustration of theological subjects were wisely encouraged by the Church. The impression made on the rude and uninstructed mind by the representations of incidents in sacred history and religious tradition by living characters, must have been far more profound than any which could have been conveyed by the genius of the sculptor or painter, or by the eloquence of the priest. Notwithstanding, therefore, the opposition that these performances encountered at the hands of a section of churchmen, who apprehended that the introduction of

the comic element would ultimately tend to feelings of irreverence, it is found that, in spite of occasional abuses, they long continued to be one of the most effectual means of disseminating a knowledge of Scriptural history and of inculcating belief in the doctrines of the Church. In the Hundred Mery Talys, a collection which was very popular in England throughout the sixteenth century, there is a story of a village priest in Warwickshire who preached a sermon on the Articles of the Creed, telling the congregation at the end of his discourse,—"these artycles ye be bounde to beleve, for they be trew and of auctoryté; and yf you beleve not me, then for a more suerté and suffycyent auctoryté go your way to Coventré, and there ye shall se them all playd in Corpus Cristi playe." Although this is related as a mere anecdote, it well illustrates the value which was then attached to the teachings of the ancient stage. Even as lately as the middle of the seventeenth century there could have been found in England an example of a person whose knowledge of the Scriptures was limited to his recollections of the performance of a mystery. The Rev. John Shaw, who was the temporary chaplain in a village in Lancashire in 1644, narrates the following curious anecdote respecting one of its inhabitants,—"one day an old man about sixty, sensible enough in other things, and living in the parish of Cartmel, coming to me about some business, I told him that he belonged to my care and charge, and I desired to be informed in his knowledge of religion;—I asked him how many Gods there were; he said, he knew not;—I, informing him, asked him again how he thought to be saved; he answered he could not tell, yet thought that was a harder question than the other;—I told him that the

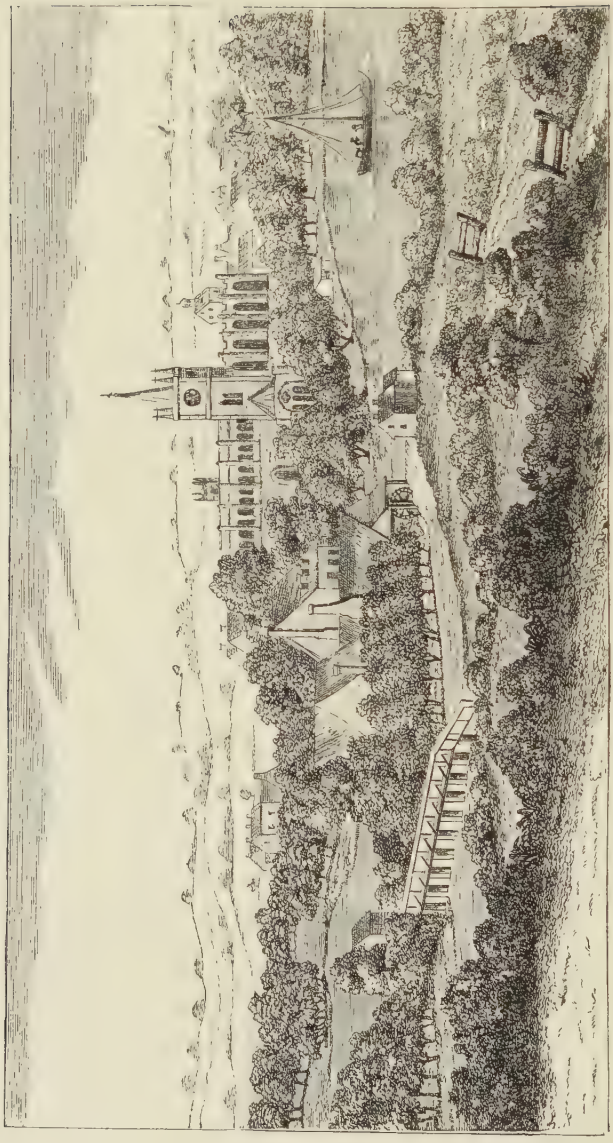
way to salvation was by Jesus Christ, God-man, who, as He was man, shed His blood for us on the crosse, &c. ;— Oh, sir, said he, I think I heard of that man you speak of once in a play at Kendall called Corpus Christi Play, where there was a man on a tree and blood ran downe, &c., and after he professed that he could not remember that ever he heard of salvation by Jesus Christ but in that play." It is impossible to say to what extent even the Scriptural allusions in the works of Shakespeare himself may not be attributed to recollections of such performances, for in one instance at least the reference by the great dramatist is to the history as represented in those plays, not to that recorded in the New Testament. The English mysteries, indeed, never lost their position as religious instructors, a fact which, viewed in connexion with that of a widely-spread affection for the old religion, appears to account for their long continuance in a practically unaltered state while other forms of the drama were being developed by their side. From the fourteenth century until the termination of Shakespeare's youthful days they remained the simple poetic versions in dialogue of religious incidents of various kinds, enlivened by the occasional admission of humorous scenes. In some few instances the theological narrative was made subservient to the comic action, but as a rule the mysteries were designed to bring before the audience merely the personages and events of religious
224 history. Allegorical characters had been occasionally introduced, and about the middle of the fifteenth century there appeared a new kind of English dramatic composition apparently borrowed from France, in which the personages were either wholly or almost exclusively of that description. When the chief object of a

performance of this nature, like that of the Cradle of Security previously described, was to inculcate a moral lesson, it was sometimes called either a Moral or a Moral-play, terms which continued in use till the seventeenth century, and were licentiously applied by some early writers to any dramas which were of an ethical or educational character. Morals were not only performed in Shakespeare's day, but continued to be a then recognized form of dramatic composition. Some of them were nearly as simple and inartificial as the mysteries, but others were not destitute of originality, or even of the delineation of character and manners. There was, however, no consecutive or systematic development of either the mystery into the moral or the moral into the historical and romantic drama, although there are examples in which the specialities of each are curiously intermingled. Each species of the early English drama appears for the most part to have pursued its own separate and independent career.

In April, 1569, the poet's sister, Joan, was born. She was baptized on the fifteenth of that month, and, by a prevalent fashion which has created so much perplexity in discussions on longevities, was named after an elder child of the same parents who was born in 1558 and had died 204
some time previously to the arrival of her younger sister. 205
Joan was then so common a name that it is hazardous to venture on a conjecture respecting the child's sponsor, but she was very likely so called after her maternal aunt, Mrs. Lambert of Barton-on-the-Heath. John Shakespeare's term of office as High Bailiff expired in the September of the same year, 1569, his successor being one Robert Salisbury, a substantial yeoman then residing in a large house on the eastern side of Church Street.

Although there is no certain information on the subject, it may perhaps be assumed that, at this time, boys usually entered the Free School at the age of seven, according to the custom followed at a later period. If so, the poet commenced his studies there in the spring of the year 1571, and unless its system of instruction differed essentially from that pursued in other establishments of a similar character, his earliest knowledge of Latin was derived from two well-known books of the time, the Accidence and the Sententiæ Pueriles. From the first of these works the improvised examination of Master Page in the Merry Wives of Windsor is so almost verbally remembered, that one might imagine that the William of the scene was a resuscitation of the poet at school. Recollections of the same book are to be traced in other of his plays. The Sententiæ Pueriles was, in all probability, the little manual by the aid of which he first learned to construe Latin, for in one place, at least, he all but literally translates a brief passage, and there are in his plays several adaptations of its sentiments. It was then sold for a penny, equivalent to about our present shilling, and contains a large collection of brief sentences collected from a variety of authors, with a distinct selection of moral and religious paragraphs, the latter intended for the use of boys on Saints' Days.

The best authorities unite in telling us that the poet imbibed a certain amount of Latin at school, but that his acquaintance with that language was, throughout his life, of a very limited character. It is not probable that scholastic learning was ever congenial to his tastes, and it should be recollected that books in most parts of the country were then of very rare occurrence. Lilly's Grammar and a few classical works, chained to the



A VIEW OF STRATFORD-ON-AVON FROM THE CROSS-ON-THE-HILL, A SKETCH TAKEN IN THE YEAR 1746.

desks of the Free School, were probably the only volumes of the kind to be found at Stratford-on-Avon. Exclusive of Bibles, Church Services, Psalters, and education manuals, there were certainly not more than two or three dozen books, if so many, in the whole town. The copy of the black-letter English history, so often depicted as well thumbed by Shakespeare in his father's parlour, never existed out of the imagination. Fortunately for us, the youthful dramatist had, excepting in the school-room, little opportunity of studying any but a grander volume, the infinite book of nature, the pages of which were ready to be unfolded to him in the lane and field, amongst the copses of Snitterfield, by the side of the river or that of his uncle's hedgerows.

Henry Shakespeare, the poet's uncle, resided on a large farm near Snitterfield church. The house has long disappeared, but two of the old enclosures that he rented, Burmans and Red Hill, are still to be observed on the right of the highway to Luscombe, with the ancient boundaries, and under the same names, by which they were distinguished in the days of Shakespeare's early youth. Nearly every one of the boy's connexions, as well as his uncle Henry, was a farmer. There was the brother of Agnes Arden, Alexander Webbe of Snitterfield, who died in 1573, appointing "to be my overseers 319
to see this my last will and testament performed, satisfied and fullfilled, according to my will, John Shackespere of Stretford-upon-Aven, John Hill of Bearley, and for theyre paynes taken I geve them xij.*d.* a pece." Henry Shakespeare was present at the execution of this will, and there is other evidence that the poet's family were on friendly terms with the Hills of Bearley, who were connexions by marriage with the Ardens. Then there were the

Lamberts of Barton-on-the-Heath, the Stringers of Bearley, the Etkyns of Wilmecote, all of whom were engaged in agricultural business, and Agnes Arden, who was still alive and farming at Wilmecote.

On March the 11th, 1574, "Richard, sonne to Mr. John Shakspeer," was baptized at Stratford, the Christian name of the infant having probably been adopted in recollection of his grandfather of Snitterfield, who had been removed by the hand of death some years previously. Independently of this new baby, there were now four other children,—Anne, who was in her third, Joan in her fifth, Gilbert in his eighth, and the poet in his tenth year. The father's circumstances were not yet on the wane, so there is every reason for believing that the eldest son, blessed with, as it has been well termed, the precious gift of sisters to a loving boy, returned to a happy fire-side after he had been tormented by the disciplinarian routine that was destined to terminate in the acquisition of "small Latin and less Greek."

The defective classical education of the poet is not, however, to be attributed to the conductors of the local seminary, for enough of Latin was taught to enable the more advanced pupils to display familiar correspondence in that language. It was really owing to his being removed from school long before the usual age, his father requiring his assistance in one of the branches of the Henley Street business. Rowe's words, published in 1709, are these,—"he had bred him, 'tis true, for some time at a free-school, where 'tis probable he acquir'd that little Latin he was master of; but the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forc'd his father to withdraw him from thence, and un-

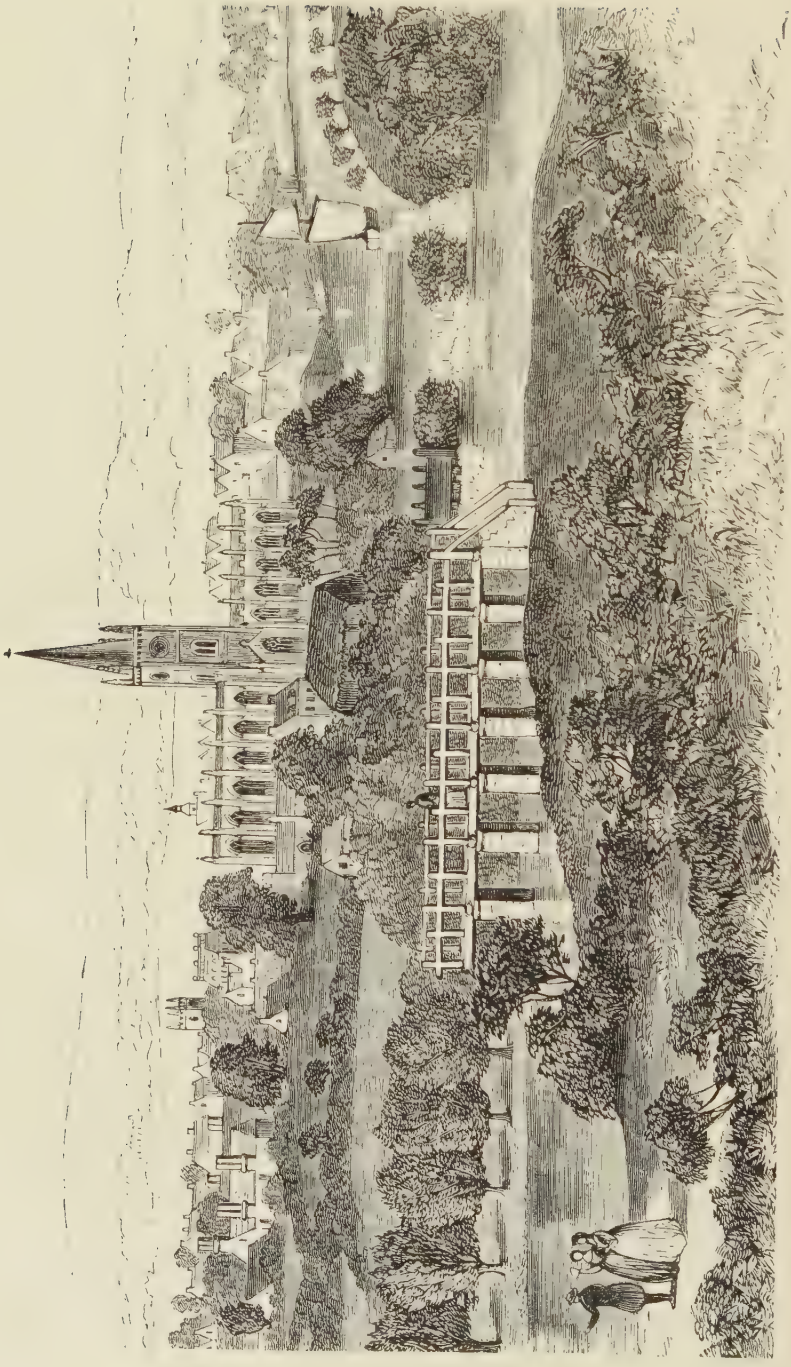
happily prevented his further proficiency in that language." John Shakespeare's circumstances had began to decline in the year 1577, and, in all probability, he removed the future dramatist from school when the latter was about thirteen, allowing Gilbert, then between ten and eleven, to continue his studies. The selection of the former for home-work may have partially arisen from his having been the elder and the stronger, but it also exhibits the father's presentiment of those talents for business which distinguished the latter part of his son's career.

The conflict of evidences now becomes so exceedingly perplexing, that it is hardly possible to completely reconcile them. All that can prudently be said is that the inclination of the testimonies leans towards the belief that John Shakespeare, following the ordinary usage of the tradesmen of the locality in binding their children to special occupations, eventually apprenticed his eldest son to a butcher. That appellation was sometimes given to persons who, without keeping meat-shops, killed cattle and pigs for others; and as there is no telling how many adjuncts the worthy glover had to his legitimate business, it is very possible that the lad may have served his articles under his own father. With respect to the unpoetical selection of a trade for the great dramatist, it is of course necessary for the biographer to draw attention to the fact that he was no ordinary executioner, but, to use the words of Aubrey, "when he killed a calf, he would do it in a high style and make a speech." It may be doubted if even this palliative will suffice to reconcile the employment with our present ideal of the gentle Shakespeare, but he was not one of the few destined, at all events in early life, to be exempt from the laws which so frequently ordain mortals to be the reluctant victims of circumstances.

The tradition reported by the parish clerk in 1693 is the only known evidence of Shakespeare having been an apprentice, but his assertion that the poet commenced his practical life as a butcher is supported by the earlier testimony of Aubrey. If the clerk's story be rejected, we must then rely on the account furnished by Betterton, who informs us, through Rowe, that John Shakespeare "was a considerable dealer in wool," and that the great dramatist, after leaving school, was brought up to follow
223 the same occupation, continuing in the business until his departure from Warwickshire. Whichever version be thought the more probable, the student will do well, before arriving at a decision, to bear in mind that many butchers of those days were partially farmers, and that those of Stratford-on-Avon largely represented the wealth and commercial intelligence of the town. Amongst the latter was Ralph Cawdrey, who had then twice served the office of High Bailiff, and had been for many years a colleague of the poet's father. Nor were the accessories of the trade viewed in the repulsive light that some of them are at the present time. The refined and lively Rosalind would have been somewhat astonished if she had been told of the day when her allusion to the washing of a sheep's heart would have been pronounced indecorous and more than unladylike.

Although the information at present accessible does not enable us to determine the exact natures of Shakespeare's occupations from his fourteenth to his eighteenth year, that is to say, from 1577 to 1582, there can be no hesitation in concluding that, during that animated and receptive period of life, he was mercifully released from what, to a spirit like his, must have been the deleterious monotony of a school education. Whether he passed

those years as a butcher or a wool-dealer does not greatly matter. In either capacity, or in any other that could 113
then have been found at Stratford, he was unconsciously acquiring a more perfect knowledge of the world and human nature than could have been derived from a study of the classics. During nearly if not all the time to which reference is now being made, he had also the opportunity of witnessing theatrical performances by some of the leading companies of the day. But trouble and sorrow invaded the paternal home. In the autumn of 1578, his father effected the then large mortgage of 40*l.* on the estate of Asbies, and the records of subsequent transactions indicate that he was suffering from pecuniary embarrassments in the two years immediately following. In the midst of these struggles he lost, in 1579, his daughter Anne, who was then in her eighth year. It cannot be doubted that the poet acutely felt the death of his little sister, nor that he followed her to the grave at a funeral which was conducted by the parents with affectionate tributes. In the next year their last child 201
was born. He was christened Edmund on May the 3rd, 344
1580, no doubt receiving that name from the husband of his maternal aunt, Mrs. Lambert. It was this gentleman who held the mortgage on Asbies, but on John Shakespeare tendering payment to him in the following autumn, 323
the money was refused until other sums due to the same creditor were also repaid. This must have been a great disappointment to the worthy glover, who had only in the previous year disposed of his wife's reversionary interests at Snitterfield for the exact amount that he had borrowed from the Lamberts in 1578, a transfer that he had perhaps arranged with a view to the redemption of the matrimonial estate at Wilmecote. It



must be borne in mind that it was at that time the practice in mortgages to name a special day for the repayment of a loan, the security falling into the indefeasible ownership of the mortgagee when the terms of the contract were not rigidly observed. There was not then the general equity of redemption which, at a later period, guarded the legitimate interests of the borrower.

The reversion that was parted with in the year 1579 consisted of a share in a considerable landed estate that had belonged to the poet's maternal grandfather, a share to which John and Mary Shakespeare would have become absolutely entitled upon the death of Agnes Arden, who 328
was described as "aged and impotent" in the July of the following year, 1580, and who died a few months afterwards, her burial at Aston Cantlowe having taken place on the 29th of December. In her will, that of a substantial lady farmer of the period, there is no direct mention of the Shakespeares, but it is not unlikely that one or more of their sons may be included in the bequest,—"to everi on of my god-children xij.*d.* a-peece,"—the absence of the testator's own christian name from their pedigree being a sufficient evidence that her baptismal responsibilities were not extended to their daughters. Taking merely a life-interest in a portion of the family estates, and Mary having received more than an equitable interest in them, she might naturally have felt herself absolved from bestowing larger gifts upon her Henley Street connections. 329

It was the usual custom at Stratford-on-Avon for apprentices to be bound either for seven or ten years, so that, if Shakespeare were one of them, it was not likely that he was out of his articles at the time of his marriage, an event that took place in 1582, when he was only in his nineteenth year. At that period, before a licence for 394

wedlock could be obtained, it was necessary to lodge at the Consistory Court a bond entered into by two responsible sureties, who by that document certified, under a heavy penalty in case of misrepresentation, that there was no impediment of precontract or consanguinity, the former of course alluding to a precontract of either of the affianced parties with a third person.

The bond given in anticipation of the marriage of William Shakespeare with Anne Hathaway, a proof in itself that there was no clandestine intention in the arrangements, is dated the twenty-eighth of November, 1582. Their first child, Susanna, was baptized on Sunday, May the 26th, 1583. With those numerous moralists who do not consider it necessary for rigid enquiry to precede condemnation, these facts taint the husband with dishonour, although, even according to modern notions, that very marriage may have been induced on his part by a sentiment in itself the very essence of honour. If we assume, however, as we
275 reasonably may, that cohabitation had previously taken
276 place, no question of morals would in those days have arisen, or could have been entertained. The precontract, which was usually celebrated two or three months before marriage, *was not only legally recognised, but it invalidated a subsequent union of either of the parties with any one else.* There was a statute, indeed, of 32 Henry VIII., 1540, c. 38, s. 2, by which certain marriages were legalised notwithstanding precontracts, but the clause was repealed by the Act of 2 & 3 Edward VI., 1548, c. 23, s. 2, and the whole statute by 1 & 2 Phil. and Mar., 1554, c. 8, s. 19, while the Act of 1 Elizabeth, 1558, c. 1, s. 11, expressly confirms the revocation made by Edward the Sixth. The ascertained facts respecting Shakespeare's

marriage clearly indicate the high probability of there having been a precontract, a ceremony which substantially had the validity of the more formal one, and the improbability of that marriage having been celebrated under mysterious or unusual circumstances. Whether the early alliance was a prudent one in a worldly point of view may admit of doubt, but that the married pair continued on affectionate terms, until they were separated by the poet's death, may be gathered from the early local tradition that his wife "did earnestly desire to be laid in the same grave with him." The legacy to her of the second-best bed is an evidence which does not in any way negative the later testimony.

The poet's two sureties, Fulk Sandells and John Richardson, were inhabitants of the little hamlet of Shottery, and on the only inscribed seal attached to the bond are the initials R. H., while the consent of friends is, in that document, limited to those of the bride. No conclusion can be safely drawn from the last-named clause, it being one very usual in such instruments, but it may perhaps be inferred from the other circumstances that the marriage was arranged under the special auspices of the Hathaway family, and that the engagement was not received with favour in Henley Street. The case, however, admits of another explanation. It may be that the nuptials of Shakespeare, like those of so many others of that time, had been privately celebrated some months before under the illegal forms of the Catholic Church, and that the relatives were now anxious for the marriage to be openly acknowledged.

It was extremely common at that time, amongst the local tradespeople, for the sanction of parents to be given to early marriages in cases where there was no money,

and but narrow means of support, on either side. It is not, therefore, likely that the consent of John and Mary Shakespeare to the poet's marriage was withheld on such grounds, nor, with the exception of the indications in the bond, are there other reasons for suspecting that they were averse to the union. But whether they were so or not is a question that does not invalidate the assumption that the lovers followed the all but universal rule of consolidating their engagement by means of a precontract. This ceremony was generally a solemn affair enacted with the immediate concurrence of all the parents, but it was at times informally conducted separately by the betrothing parties, evidence of the fact, communicated by them to independent persons, having been held, at least in Warwickshire, to confer a sufficient legal validity on the transaction. Thus, in 1585, William Holder and Alice Shaw, having privately made a contract, came voluntarily before two witnesses, one of whom was a person named Willis and the other a John Maides of Snitterfield, on purpose to acknowledge that they were irrevocably pledged to wedlock. The lady evidently considered herself already as good as married, saying to Holder,—"I do confesse that I am your wief and have forsaken all my frendes for your sake, and I hope you will use me well;" and thereupon she "gave him her hand." Then, as Maides observes, "the said Holder, *mutatis mutandis*, used the like words unto her in effect, and toke her by the hand, and kissed together in the presence of this deponent and the said Willis." These proceedings are afterwards referred to in the same depositions as constituting a definite "contract of marriage." On another occasion, in 1588, there was a precontract meeting at Alcester, the young lady arriving

there unaccompanied by any of her friends When requested to explain the reason of this omission, "she answered that her leasure wold not lett her and that she thought she cold not obtaine her mother's goodwill, but, quoth she, neverthelesse I am the same woman that I was before." The future bridegroom was perfectly satisfied with this assurance, merely asking her "whether she was content to betake herself unto him, and she answered, offring her hand, which he also tooke upon thoffer that she was content by her trothe, and thereto, said she, I geve thee my faith, and before these witnesses, that I am thy wief; and then he likewise answered in theis wordes, vidz., and I geve thee my faith and troth, and become thy husband." These instances, to which several others could be added, prove decisively that Shakespeare could have entered, under any circumstances whatever, into a precontract with Anne Hathaway. It may be worth adding that espousals of this kind were, in the Midland counties, almost invariably terminated by the lady's acceptance of a bent sixpence. One lover, who was betrothed in the same year in which Shakespeare was engaged to Anne Hathaway, gave also a pair of gloves, two oranges, two handkerchiefs and a girdle of broad red silk. A present of gloves on such an occasion was, indeed, nearly as universal as that of a sixpence.

It can never be right for a biographer, when he is unsupported by the least particle of evidence, to assume that the subject of his memoir departed unnecessarily from the ordinary usages of life and society. In Shakespeare's matrimonial case, those who imagine that there was no precontract have to make another extravagant admission. They must ask us also to believe that the

lady of his choice was as disreputable as the flax-wench, and gratuitously united with the poet in a moral wrong that could have been converted, by the smallest expenditure of trouble, into a moral right. The whole theory is absolutely incredible. We may then feel certain that, in the summer of the year 1582, William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway were betrothed either formally or informally, but, at all events, under conditions that could, if necessary, have been legally ratified.

There are reasons for believing that later in the century cohabitation between the precontract and the marriage began to be generally regarded with much disfavour, but the only means of arriving at an equitable judgment upon the merits of the present case lay in a determination to investigate it strictly in its relation with practices the legitimacy of which was acknowledged in Warwickshire in the days of the poet's youth. If the antecedents of Shakespeare's union with Miss Hathaway were regarded with equanimity by their own neighbours, relatives and friends, upon what grounds can a modern critic fairly impugn the propriety of their conduct? And that they were so regarded is all but indisputable. Assuming, as we have a right to assume, that the poet's mother must have been a woman of sensitive purity, was she now entertaining the remotest apprehension that her son's honour was imperiled? Assuredly not, for she had passed her youth amidst a society who believed that a precontract had all the validity of a marriage, the former being really considered a more significant and important ceremony than the other. When her own father, Robert Arden, settled part of an estate upon his daughter Agnes, on July the seventeenth, 1550, he introduces her as *nunc uxor Thome Stringer, ac nuper uxor Johannis Hewyns,*

and yet the marriage was not solemnized until three months afterwards. "1550, 15 October, was maryed Thomas Stringer unto Agnes Hwens, wyddow," Bearley register. Let us hope that, after the production of this decisive testimony, nothing more will be heard of the insinuations that have hitherto thrown an unpleasant shadow over one of the most interesting periods of our author's career.

The marriage, in accordance with the general practice, no doubt took place within two or three days after the execution of the bond on November the 28th, 1582, the "once asking of the bans" being included in the ceremonial service. The name of the parish in which the nuptials were celebrated has not been ascertained, but it must have been one of those places in the diocese of Worcester the early registers of which have been lost.

Early marriages are not, however, at least with men, invariably preceded by a dispersion of the wild oats; and it appears that Shakespeare had neglected to complete that usually desirable operation, but now a fortunate omission that necessitated his removal to the only locality in which it was probable that his dramatic genius could have arrived at complete maturity. Three or four years after his union with Anne Hathaway, he had, observes Rowe, "by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and, amongst them, some, that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him with them more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, near Strat- 345
ford;—for this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely, and, in order to revenge that ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him; and

7. William Shakespeare.

William Shakespeare was born at Stratford
upon Avon in Warwickshire about 1563. 4.
much given to all unluckinesse in Stealing venison &
Rabbits, particularly from Sr Lucy who had him
oft whipt & sometimes Imprisoned & at last made him
fly his Native Country to his great Advancemt but
His revenge was so great that he in his Justice Clodpate
and calls him a great man & y^t in allusion to his name bore three
From an Actor of Playes; he became a Composer
lowSes rampant for his Arms

Ætat. 53.

He dyed Apr. 23. 1616. probably at Stratford,
for there he is buryed. and hath a Monument on
w^ch he lays a Heavy curse upon any one
who shal remoove his bones. He dyed a papist.

Dugd. p 520.

though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, 346
yet it is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled
the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was
obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire
for some time, and shelter himself in London." If we
accept this narrative, which is the most reliable account
of the incident that has been preserved, the date of the
poet's departure from his native town may be reasonably
assigned to the year 1585. He certainly could not have
left the neighbourhood before the summer of 1584, the
baptisms of his youngest children, the twin Hamnet and
Judith, having been registered at Stratford-on-Avon on
February the second in the following year; neither could
his retreat have been enforced during his oppressor's
attendance at the Parliament which sat from November 347
the twenty-third, 1584, to March the twenty-ninth, 1585.
It is worthy of remark that Sir Thomas had the charge,
early in the last-named month, of a bill "for the preser-
vation of grain and game," so it is clear that the knight
of Charlecote was a zealous game-preserver, even if the
introduction of the proposed measure were not the result
of the depredations committed by the poet and his
companions.

Another version of the narrative has been recorded 348
by Archdeacon Davies, who was the vicar of Sapperton,
a village in the neighbouring county of Gloucester, and
who died there in the year 1708. According to this
authority the future great dramatist was "much given to
all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly
from Sir Thomas Lucy, who had him oft whipped and 349
sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native
county to his great advancement; but his revenge was so
great that he is his Justice Clodpate, and calls him a great 350

man, and that in allusion to his name bore three louses rampant for his arms." It is evident, therefore, from the independent testimonies of Rowe and Davies, that the deer-stealing history was accepted in the poet's native town and in the neighbourhood during the latter part of the seventeenth century. That it has a solid basis of fact cannot admit of a reasonable doubt. It was current at a period in the history of Shakespearean appreciation before tales of the kind became liable to intentional falsification, and the impressive story of the penniless fugitive, who afterwards became a leading inhabitant of Stratford and the owner of New Place, was one likely to be handed down with passable fidelity to the grandchildren of his contemporaries. It is, moreover, one which exactly harmonizes with circumstances that materially add to its probability,—with the satirical allusions to the Lucys in their immediate relation to a poaching adventure, and with the certainty that there must have been some very grave reason to induce him to leave his wife and children to seek his unaided fortunes in a distant part of the country, rendering himself at the same time liable to imprisonment (5 Eliz. c. 4. s. 47) for violating the conditions of his apprenticeship. If there had been no such grave reason, how should there have been the provincial belief in 1693 that he had ran "from his master to London, and there received into the play-house as a servitor?" What but a strong and compulsory motive could have driven him so far away from a locality to which, as we gather from subsequent events, he was sensitively attached? The only theory, indeed, that would sanction the unconditional rejection of the traditions is that which assumes that they were designed in explanation of the allusions in the Merry Wives of Windsor, but surely, if

that had been the case, there would have been a more explicit reference to the accusations of Master Shallow, charges that are in the aggregate of a more formidable description than those which have been transmitted by hearsay. "You have hurt my keeper, kill'd my dogs, stol'n my deer," ed. 1602. "You have beaten my men, kill'd my deer, and broke open my lodge," ed. 1623. It is also exceedingly improbable that there should have been any one at Stratford-on-Avon at the time of Betterton's visit who would have cared to elucidate the justice's implications, and it would appear, from the incorrect quotations which are given by Davies, that even the archdeacon was somewhat better acquainted with the history of Sir Thomas Lucy than he was with the comedy.

Neither the best citizens nor the most amiable men are always those whose cautious and dispassionate temperaments have enabled them to pass through the heats of youth without getting into scrapes. Those only, indeed, who consider it their duty to invest the greatest of dramatists with the honours of canonization will be distressed to hear that the poet, in the years of his apprenticeship to a cheerless business, got into trouble by netting rabbits and occasionally joining in the class of adventures that were then known under the title of "unlawful huntings." The general tradition amongst the rustics of the neighbourhood was, and perhaps still is, that he was wild in his younger days, an impression delivered, as I have heard it in years gone by, in no tone or spirit of detraction ; and he was wild in the least reprehensible of all irregular directions, not in the slums of Warwick, nor with roisterers in the taverns of Stratford, but in sports of the wood and the field that may have been illegally pursued, but were nevertheless regarded by the multitude

as indications of manly spirit and gallantry. Sir Philip Sydney's May-Lady terms deer-stealing a "prettie service," and this was the light in which it was usually viewed so long as the keepers were outwitted. These were days when youthful raids for fruit or animals were not only excusable in the eyes of society, but apt to be considered desirable features of education, and we accordingly find a writer of the next century, Francis Osborn, born about the year 1589, bitterly lamenting that, owing to the mild character of his home-training, he had lost the advantages which others had derived from a participation in such-like kind of exploits; for, to quote his own words, "not undergoing the same discipline, I must needs come short of their experience that are bred up in free-schools, who, by plotting to rob an orchard, &c., run through all the subtleties required in taking of a town; being made by use familiar to secrecy and compliance with opportunity, qualities never after to be attained at cheaper rates than the hazard of all; whereas these see the danger of trusting others and the rocks they fall upon by a too obstinate adhering to their own imprudent resolutions, and all this under no higher penalty than a whipping." Then there was the curious fact that the students of Oxford, the centre of the kingdom's learning and intelligence, had been for many generations the most notorious poachers in all England. An Act of the fifteenth century, under which disorderly hunters were to be banished from the university, does not appear to have been very effective, for their serious depredations in the reign of Henry the Eighth, positively led, as recorded by Leland, to the disparking of Radley, near Abingdon, a park that was about four miles distant from the scholastic city. The same lawless spirit prevailed amongst the

younger collegians for many years. Dr. Forman relates how two students in 1573,—one of them John Thornborough, then aged twenty-one, afterwards Dean of York and Bishop of Worcester,—"never studied nor gave themselves to their books, but to go to schools of defence, to the dancing-schools, *to steal deer and conies*, and to hunt the hare, and to wooing of wenches." This was pretty well, and yet we are told, on the excellent authority of Anthony Wood, that Thornborough "was a person well-furnish'd with learning, wisdom, courage, and other as well episcopal as temporal accomplishments beseeming a gentleman, a dean, and a bishop;" so it is clear that his attachment to the recreation of game-stealing at Shakespeare's poaching-age was not in any way detrimental to his subsequent reputation. He would, indeed, have suffered far more in the estimation of his contemporaries if he had been the Oxford freshman who, as recorded in the old jest-books, joining his fellow-students in one of their favourite clandestine expeditions upon the understanding that he was to maintain a rigid silence, vexatiously frightened away a choice herd of rabbits by exclaiming, *ecce cuniculi multi;* thus excusing himself when reproved for his folly,—who in the world, said he, would have thought that conies could have understood Latin?

But although it will be gathered from these evidences that amateur poaching was not always visited in those days with a distinct loss of character, it must not be inferred that its votaries, when detected, did not sometimes get into trouble and a certain amount of attendant disgrace. Much would depend upon the extent and nature of the depredations, and no little of course on the special tastes and pursuits of the owners. The landed gentry had suffered so much inconvenience from the practice 351

that many of them had long been anxious for the establishment of stricter game-laws. Strenuous efforts had been made to render even rabbit-taking a felony, and it is not probable that Sir Thomas Lucy, an enthusiastic sportsman and an advocate for game-preservation, could have regarded the doings of Shakespeare and his companions with equanimity. It was natural that he should
352 do his best to protect his covers from spoliation, and it is easy to believe that there may have been a display of arbitrary and undue severity in the process. There could have been no one amongst the poachers who would have been likely to have offered a successful resistance, or who would have dared to have appealed to a superior court in respect to a matter in which all of them were incipiently in the wrong; and it must be borne in mind that the future poet was then no more either to Sir Thomas or to the world than Peter Turf or Henry Pimpernell. They
353 might have been indicted under an Act of the thirteenth of Richard the Second, c. 13, which provided that "no manner of layman which hath not lands or tenements to the value of fourty shillings by year shall have or keep any greyhound, hound, nor other dog to hunt; nor shall they use ferrets, hays, nets, hare-pipes, nor cords nor other engines for to take or destroy deer, hares, nor conies, nor other gentlemen's game, upon pain of one year's imprisonment;" but the county records of the time not being extant, it is now impossible to ascertain the course of any proceedings that may have been taken in the matter. And even if the Session Rolls had been preserved, it is not likely that all the particulars of the case would have been revealed, for in all probability Sir Thomas Lucy frequently took it upon himself to exercise a summary jurisdiction in regard to minor

offences. Such a method of settlement may have been on occasion convenient to both parties if, for example, he had sent delinquents to gaol on his own responsibility for two or three months when a legal conviction would have secured their imprisonment for twelve. It must be remembered that the rural magistrates of those days assumed very large discretionary powers, their "luxuriant authority," as it was termed by an Elizabethan legislator, having been a frequent subject of complaint. "Truly it is to be wished," observes Lambard in 1582, "that justices of the peace would not arrogate unto themselves authority to use their discretion, and to play, as it were, the Chancellors in every cause that cometh before them." It was not every one of those magnates who would have said with Sir Robert Cecil,—"for my deare that are killed, what I can do by law I will prove, but otherwise I will reveng myself by no other meanes under colour of authority, being in myne owne case," letter of 1600, MS. Lansd. 87. That the magistrates in the vicinity of Stratford-on-Avon were accustomed to exercise a despotic sway over the poorer inhabitants may be gathered from the fact that at a somewhat later period William Combe, the squire of Welcombe, sent a person of the name of Hiccox to Warwick gaol, and refused bail, merely because he "did not behave himself with such respect in his presence it seemeth he looked for." What would he not have done if he had first caught his disrespectful visitor marching off with his rabbits and deer, and then, with unprecedented temerity, electrifying the neighbourhood by the circulation of a poetical lampoon reflecting upon the intelligence and judgment of His Worship? Now Shakespeare, in his poaching days, the penniless son of an impecunious father, and without friends of 354

appreciable influence, would assuredly have fared no better on such occasions than poor Hiccox, unless he had been, as he obviously was not, high in the favour of Davy, the servingman ; and the most rational mode of accounting for and excusing his long-sustained resentment is to recognize a substantial groundwork of facts in the early traditions. They are in unison with possibilities that furnish an intelligible explanation of the known circumstances, and all becomes clear if it be assumed that a persistive, harsh, and injudicial treatment elicited the obnoxious ballad. Its author could have been severely punished under the common law for its exhibition, and there can be little doubt that it was a contemplated movement in reference to the libel, in addition, perhaps, to some other indictment, that occasioned his flight to the metropolis.

The Sir Thomas Lucy who received the honour of knighthood in 1565, and had thus accidentally diverted the course of what might otherwise have been an unnoted life, was the head of one of the most opulent and influential families in the county of Warwick. Owning estates in various parts of the country, including, within a few miles of Stratford-on-Avon, the manors of Sherbourn, Hampton Lucy and Charlecote, they had been settled at the last-named demain for many generations. Sir Thomas was born in 1532, and was therefore about fifty-three years of age at the time of the poet's sprightly adventures. He married in early life Joyce Acton, a rich heiress, through whom he became possessed of Sutton Park, near Tenbury, then and for long afterwards
355 one of the most important deer-enclosures in Worcestershire, where he was high sheriff in 1586. He was elected to the Parliaments of 1571 and 1584, but his absenteeisms

from Warwickshire were exceptional, and there he held a social position little inferior to that of the higher nobility. His only son was knighted in 1593, and thus it curiously happened that, from that year until his death in 1600, there were two Sir Thomas Lucys of Charlecote, the one known as the younger and the other as the elder. The ancestral manor house, which the latter rebuilt in the first 356
of Elizabeth, 1558 and 1559, was arranged, out of compliment to that sovereign, in the form of the capital letter E, and it remains to this day the "goodly dwelling and a rich," a visible monument of his wealth and residential dignity. It is situated on the eastern bank of the Avon,

upon ground of a slightly undulating character, about four miles from Stratford through the bye-paths that the trespassers would most likely have followed. Although the whole edifice has been seriously modernized, the back especially having been nearly transformed, the front-exterior still retains the general characteristics of the original structure; but by far the most genuine and interesting object is the ancient gate-house, which stands in advance at a little distance from the mansion, and which, with its turrets and elegant oriel window, is essentially in the state in which it would have been recognised by the now celebrated poachers of 1585.

At the period of Shakespeare's arrival in London, any reputable kind of employment was obtained with considerable difficulty. There is an evidence of this in the history of the early life of John Sadler, a native of Stratford-on-Avon and one of the poet's contemporaries, who tried his fortunes in the metropolis under similar though less discouraging circumstances. This youth, upon quitting Stratford, "join'd himself to the carrier, and came to London, where he had never been before, and sold his horse in Smithfield; and, having no acquaintance in London to recommend him or assist him, he went from street to street, and house to house, asking if they wanted an apprentice, and though he met with many discouraging scorns and a thousand denials, he went on till he light on Mr. Brokesbank, a grocer in Bucklersbury, who, though he long denied him for want of sureties for his fidelity, and because the money he had (but ten pounds) was so disproportionable to what he used to receive with apprentices, yet, upon his discreet account he gave of himself and the motives which put him upon that course, and promise to compensate with diligent and faithfull service whatever else was short of his expectation, he ventured to receive him upon trial, in which he so well approved himself that he accepted him into his service, to which he bound him for eight years." It is to be gathered, from the account given by Rowe, that Shakespeare, a fugitive, leaving his native town unexpectedly, must have reached London more unfavourably circumstanced than Sadler, although the latter experienced so much trouble in finding occupation. At all events, there would have been greater difficulty in the poet's case in accounting satisfactorily to employers for his sudden departure from home. That he was also nearly, if not

quite, moneyless, is to be inferred from tradition, the latter supported by the ascertained fact of the adverse circumstances of his father at the time rendering it impossible for him to have received effectual assistance from his parents; nor is there reason for believing that he was likely to have obtained substantial aid from the relatives of his wife. Johnson no doubt accurately reported the tradition of his day, when, in 1765, he stated that Shakespeare "came to London a needy adventurer, and lived for a time by very mean employments." To the same effect is the earlier testimony given by the author of Ratseis Ghost, 1605, where the strolling player, in a passage reasonably believed to refer to the great dramatist, observes in reference to actors, "I have heard, indeede, of some that have gone to London *very meanly* and have come in time to be exceeding wealthy." The author of the last-named tract was evidently well acquainted with the theatrical gossip of his day, so that his nearly contemporary evidence on the subject may be fairly accepted as a truthful record of the current belief.

It has been repeatedly observed that the visits of theatrical companies to the poet's native town suffice to explain the history of his connexion with the stage, but it is difficult to understand how this could have been the case. There is no good evidence that a single one of the 238
actors belonged to his neighbourhood, and even if he had casually made the acquaintance of some of the itinerants, it is extremely unlikely that any extent of such intimacy would have secured the admission of an inexperienced person into their ranks. The histrionic art is not learnt in a day, and it was altogether unusual with the sharers to receive into the company men who had not had the advantage of a very early training in the profession. I

might, therefore, have been reasonably inferred, even in the absence of tradition, that at this time Shakespeare could only have obtained employment at the theatre in a very subordinate capacity, nor can it be safely assumed that there would have been an opening for him of any kind. The quotations above given seem to indicate that his earlier occupation was something of a still lower character. A traditional anecdote was current about the middle of the last century, according to which it would appear that the great dramatist, if connected in any sort of manner with the theatre immediately upon his arrival in London, could only have been engaged in a servile capacity, and that there was, in the career of the great poet, an interval which some may consider one of degradation, to be regarded with either incredulity or sorrow. Others may, with more discernment and without reluctance, receive the story as a testimony to his practical wisdom in accepting any kind of honest occupation in preference to starvation or mendicancy, and cheerfully making the best of the circumstances by which he was surrounded. The tale is related by several writers, but
81 perhaps the best version is the one recorded by Dr. Johnson, in 1765, in the following terms,—"in the time of Elizabeth, coaches being yet uncommon and hired coaches not at all in use, those who were too proud, too tender or too idle to walk, went on horseback to any distant business or diversion;—many came on horseback to the play, and when Shakespeare fled to London from the terror of a criminal prosecution, his first expedient was to wait at the door of the play-house, and hold the horses of those that had no servants that they might be ready again after the performance;—in this office he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness, that

in a short time every man as he alighted called for Will Shakespeare, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse while Will Shakespeare could be had;—this was the first dawn of better fortune;—Shakespeare, finding more horses put into his hand than he could hold, hired boys to wait under his inspection, who, when Will Shakespeare was summoned, were immediately to present themselves, 'I am Shakespeare's boy, sir;'—in time Shakespeare found higher employment, but as long as the practice of riding to the play-house continued the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of Shakespeare's Boys." Dr. Johnson received this anecdote from Pope, to whom it had been communicated by Rowe; and it appears to have reached the last-named writer through Betterton and Davenant.

It has been and is the fashion with most biographers to discredit the horse tradition entirely, but that it was originally related by Sir William Davenant, and belongs in some form to the earlier half of the seventeenth century, cannot reasonably be doubted. The circumstance of the anecdote being founded upon the practice of gentlemen riding to the theatres, a custom obsolete after the Restoration, is sufficient to establish the antiquity of the story. In a little volume of epigrams by Sir John Davis, printed at Middleborough in or about the year 1599, a man of inferior position is ridiculed for being constantly on horseback, imitating in that respect persons of higher rank, riding even "*into the fieldes playes to behold.*" Most of these horsemen were probably accustomed to a somewhat lavish expenditure, and it may very well be assumed that Shakespeare not unfrequently received more than the ordinary fee of a tester for his services. There is, at all events, no valid reason

for enrolling the tradition amongst the absolute fictions that have been circulated respecting the poet. Several writers have taken that course mainly on the ground that, although it was known to Rowe, he does not allude to it in his Life of Shakespeare, 1709; but there is no improbability in the supposition that the story was not related to him until after the publication of that work, the second edition of which in 1714 is a mere reprint of the first. Other reasons for the omission may be suggested, but even if it be conceded that the anecdote was rejected as suspicious and improbable, that circumstance alone cannot be decisive against the opinion that there may be glimmerings of truth in it. This is, indeed, all that is contended for. Few would be disposed to accept the story literally as related by Johnson, but when it is considered that the tradition must be a very early one, that its genealogy is respectable, and that it harmonizes with the general old belief of the great poet having, when first in London, subsisted by "very mean employments," little doubt can fairly be entertained that it has at least in some way or other a foundation in real occurrences. It
82 should also be remembered that horse-stealing was one of the very commonest offences of the period, and one which was probably stimulated by the facility with which delinquents of that class obtained pardons. The safe custody of a horse was a matter of serious import, and a person who had satisfactorily fulfilled such a trust would not be lightly estimated.

It is important to observe that all the early traditions, to which any value can be attached, concur in the belief that Shakespeare did not leave his native town with histrionic intention. Even in the absence of those evidences, although it might not necessarily, still it

might, and most likely would, be a fallacy to assume that his dramatic tastes impelled him to undertake an arduous and premeditated journey to encounter the risk of an engagement at a metropolitan theatre, however powerfully they may have influenced his choice of a profession after he had once arrived in London. For, residing throughout his youth in what may fairly be considered a theatrical neighbourhood, with continual facilities for the cultivation of those tastes, if he had yielded in his boyish days to an impulsive fascination for the stage, it is most likely that he would in some way have joined the profession while its doors were readily accessible through one of the numerous itinerant companies, and before, not after, such inclinations must have been in some measure restrained by the local domestic ties that resulted from his marriage. If he had quitted Stratford-on-Avon in his early youth, there would be no difficulty in understanding that he became one of the elder player's boys or apprentices, but it is extremely unlikely that, at the age of twenty-one, he would have voluntarily left a wife and three children in Warwickshire for the sake of obtaining a miserable position on the London boards.

It is not, therefore, requisite to assume that Shakespeare rushed in the first instance to the theatre or its neighbourhood in search of employment, and a plausible explanation can be given of the circumstances which led him to the occupation mentioned in the Davenant anecdote. It appears that James Burbage, the owner of the Theatre, rented premises close by Smithfield in which he "usually kept horses at liverye for sundry persons;" his assistant, or rather manager, of the stable being "a northerne man usually called by the name of Robyn,"

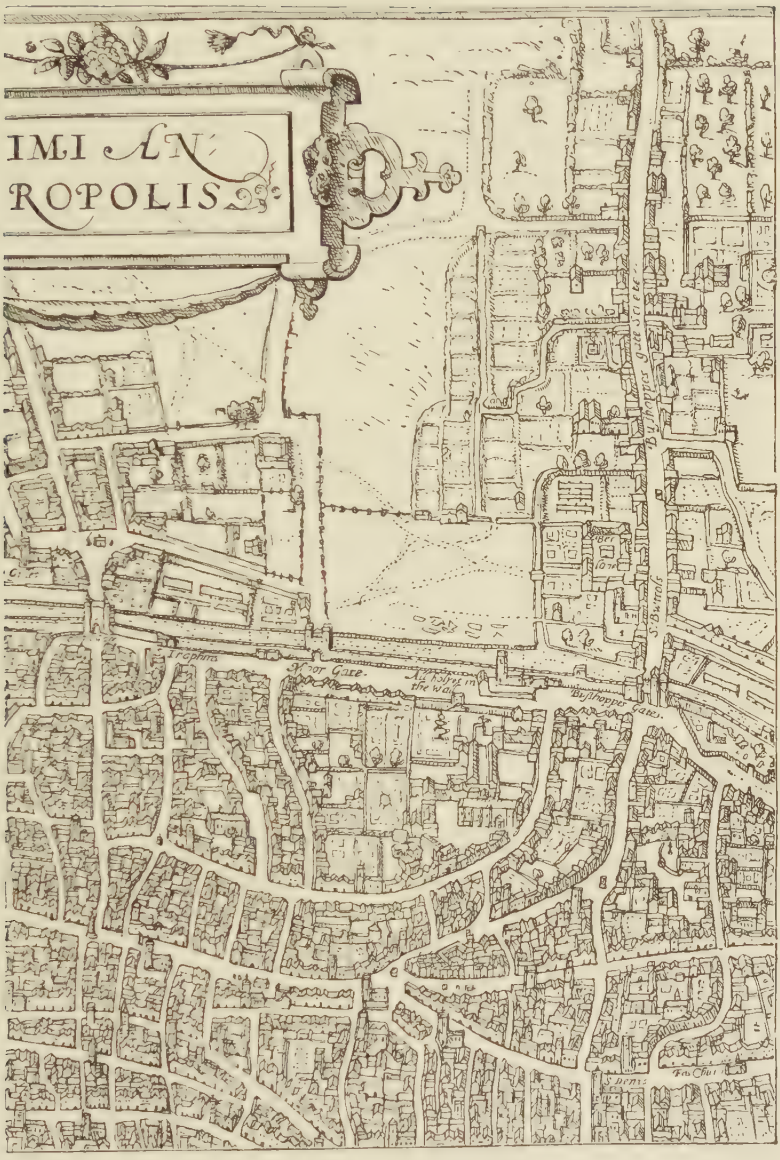
possibly the same individual whose life was afterwards sacrificed by the unfortunate rise in the price of oats. If the course adopted by Sadler on his arrival in London was, as is most likely, the one also taken by the poet, the latter would at once have proceeded to Smithfield to obtain the best price for the horse which carried him to the metropolis, the further retention of the animal being no doubt beyond his means. He might readily upon this occasion have become acquainted with James Burbage at a time when he was desirous of obtaining any kind of situation that presented itself, the tradition leading to the inference that he was engaged by the latter to act in some equestrian capacity. If so, one of his duties would have been the care, during the performances, of the horses of those of Burbage's Smithfield customers who visited the theatre. This enterprising manager was also the landlord of a tavern in Shoreditch, where it is possible that his own horses may have been kept. He must, at all events, have been just the kind of person to be ready to take an active and intelligent rustic into his service, without being too inquisitive respecting the history of the young man's antecedents.

The transition from the stable and the fields to the interior of the theatre may not have been long deferred, but all the evidences unite in affirming that Shakespeare
83 entered the latter in a very humble capacity. The best authority on this point is one William Castle, who was the parish-clerk of Stratford-on-Avon during nearly all the latter part of the seventeenth century, and used to tell visitors that the poet "was received into the playhouse as a serviture," in other words, an attendant on the performers. A later account is somewhat more explicit. We are informed by Malone, writing in 1780, that there

was "a stage tradition that his first office in the theatre was that of prompter's attendant, whose employment it is to give the performers notice to be ready to enter as often as the business of the play requires their appearance on the stage;" nor can the future eminence of Shakespeare be considered to be opposed to the reception of the tradition. "I have known men within my remembrance," observes Downes, in 1710, "arrive to the highest dignities of the theatre, who made their entrance in the quality of mutes, joint-stools, flower-pots, and tapestry-hangings." The office of prompter's attendant was at least as respectable as any of the occupations which are here enumerated.

No one has recorded the name of the first theatre with which Shakespeare was connected, but if, as is almost certain, he came to London in or soon after the year 1585, there were at the time of his arrival only two in the metropolis, both of them on the north of the Thames. The earliest legitimate theatre on the south was the Rose, the erection of which was contemplated in the year 1587, but it would seem from Henslowe's Diary that the building was not opened till early in 1592. The circus at Paris Garden, though perhaps occasionally used for dramatic performances, was not a regular theatre. Admitting, however, the possibility that companies of players could have hired the latter establishment, there is good reason for concluding that Southwark was not the locality alluded to in the Davenant tradition. The usual mode of transit, for those Londoners who desired to attend theatrical performances in Southwark, was certainly by water. The boatmen of the Thames were perpetually asserting at a somewhat later period that their living depended on the continuance of the Southwark, and the suppression of the London, theatres. Some few of the

LONDINVM FERACISS
GLIAE REGNI MET
Clarkenwell
Smythe
Fyeld

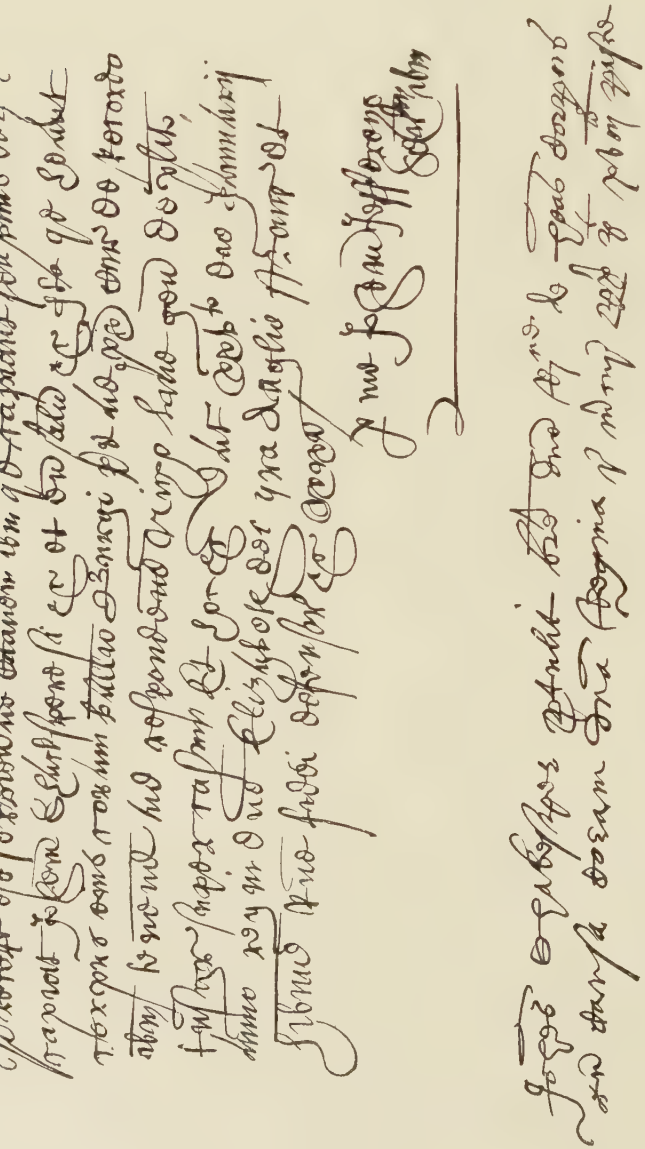

IMI AN
ROPOLIS
Aldgate
Bishopsgate

courtly members of the audience, perhaps for the mere sake of appearances, might occasionally have arrived at their destination on horseback, having taken what would be to most of them the circuitous route over London Bridge; but the large majority would select the more convenient passage by boat. The Southwark audiences mainly consisted of Londoners, for in the then sparsely inhabited condition of Kent and Surrey very few could have arrived from those counties. The number of riders to the Bankside theatres must, therefore, always have been very limited, too much so for the remunerative employment of horse-holders, whose services would be required merely in regard to the still fewer persons who were unattended by their lackeys. The only theatres upon the other side of the Thames, when the poet arrived in London, were the Theatre and the Curtain, for, notwithstanding some apparent testimonies to the contrary, the Blackfriars Theatre, as will be afterwards seen, was not then in existence. It was to the Theatre or to the Curtain that the satirist alluded when he speaks of the fashionable youth riding "into the fieldes playes to behold." Both these theatres were situated in the parish of Shoreditch, in the fields of the Liberty of Halliwell, in which locality, if the Davenant tradition is in the slightest degree to be trusted, Shakespeare must have commenced his metropolitan life. This new career, however, was initiated not absolutely in London, but in a thinly populated outskirt about half a mile from the city walls, a locality possessing outwardly the appearance of a country village, but inwardly sustaining much of the bustle and all the vices of the town. These latter inconveniences could easily be avoided, for there were in the neighbouring meadows ample opportunities for quiet meditation or

scientific enquiry. Here it was that Gerard, the celebrated botanist, stumbled a few years afterwards upon a new kind of crow-foot which he describes as being similar to the ordinary plant, "saving that his leaves are fatter, thicker, and greener, and his small twiggie stalkes stand upright, otherwise it is like; of which kinde it chanced that, walking in the fielde next unto the Theater by London, in company of a worshipfull marchant named master Nicholas Lete, I founde one of this kinde there with double flowers, which before that time I had not seene," the Herball, 1597, p. 804. Thus Shakespeare's observation of our wild flowers was not necessarily limited, as has been supposed, to his provincial experiences, two of the principal theatres with which he was connected having been situated in a rural suburb, and green fields being throughout his life within an easy walk from any part of London.

Nothing has been discovered respecting the history of Shakespeare's early theatrical life, but there is an interesting evidence that no estrangement between his parents and himself had followed the circumstances that led him to the metropolis, a fact which is established by his concurrence with them in an endeavour that they were making in 1587 to obtain favourable terms for a proposed relinquishment of Asbies. Nine years previously they had borrowed the sum of £40, on the security of that estate, from their connexion, Edmund Lambert of Barton-on-the-Heath. The loan remaining unpaid, and the mortgagee dying in April, 1587, his son and heir, John, threatened 320
shortly after that event with the institution of a law-suit for the recovery of the property, was naturally desirous of having the matter settled, and it was arranged in the 321
following September that Lambert should, on cancelling

Facsimiles of legal evidences which illustrate the unsatisfactory condition of John Shakespeare's financial affairs in the year 1587.



the mortgage and paying also the sum of £20, receive from the Shakespeares an absolute title to the estate, or, to speak more accurately, the best title which it was in 322
their power to grant. Having obtained the assent of William, who was his mother's heir-apparent, they were enabled to offer all but a perfect security; but it appears, from the records of a subsequent litigation, that the intended compromise was abandoned.

It clearly appears, from the account given by Rowe, that Shakespeare returned to his native town after the dangers from the Lucy prosecution had subsided. The same writer informs us that the visit occurred subsequently to his junction with one of the theatrical companies. The exact dates of these events are unknown, but it is not likely that he would have ventured into Sir Thomas's neighbourhood for a considerable time after his escapade. Country justices wielded in those days tremendous power in adjudication on minor offences. There were no newspapers to carry the intelligence of provincial tyranny to the ears of a sensitive public opinion, and there is no doubt that a youth in Shakespeare's position, who had dared to lampoon the most influential magistrate of the locality, would have been for some time in a critical position. However greatly he may have desired to rejoin his family, it is, therefore, not probable that the poet would be found again at Stratford-on-Avon before the year 1587, and then we have, in the Lambert episode, a substantial reason for believing that he had at that time a conference with his parents on the subject of the Asbies mortgage. The sum of £20, equivalent to at least £240 of our present money, to be paid in cash by Lambert, would have been an element of serious importance to them all in their then financial circum-

stances. It must have been a subject for anxious deliberation, one that could hardly have been arranged without a personal interview, and, in the presence of Rowe's testimony, it may fairly be assumed that the meeting took place at Stratford, not in London.

In the same year, 1587, an unusual number of companies of actors visited Stratford-on-Avon, including the Queen's Players and those of Lords Essex, Leicester, and Stafford. This circumstance has given rise to a variety of speculations respecting the company to which the poet may then have belonged; but the fact is that we are destitute of any information, and have no relative means of forming an opinion on the subject. Even if it be conceded that Burbage's theatre was the first with which Shakespeare was connected, no progress is made in the enquiry. That personage, who had retired from the stage, was in the habit of letting the building to any public entertainers who would remunerate him either in cash or by a share of profits. There was no establishment at that time devoted for a long continuous period to the use of a single company.

It is, however, all but certain that the favourite theory of Shakespeare having been one of the Queen's servants at this period is incorrect, for his name is not found in the official list belonging to the following year; so that, if he was connected in any way with them, he could at the latter date have been merely one of the underlings who were not in a position of sufficient importance to be included in the register. With the single exception of the absence of his name from that list, no evidence whatever has been discovered to warrant a conjecture on the subject. But although there is no reason for believing that he was ever one of the royal actors, we may be

sure that he must have witnessed, either at Stratford or London, some of the inimitable performances of the company's star, the celebrated Richard Tarlton. This individual, the "pleasant Willy" of Spenser, who died in 390
September, 1588, was the most popular comedian of the day, one of those instinctive humourists who have merely to show their faces to be greeted with roars of merriment. It may have been, when the part of Derick, the clown, was in his hands, that Shakespeare became acquainted with the Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, a lively play, some of the incidents of which he unquestionably recollected when composing his histories of that sovereign and his predecessor. There was another drama that was played in London about the same time, one in which Tarlton's personation of a dissolute youth was singularly popular and long remembered. In this latter was a death-bed scene, a notice of which may be worth giving as an example of the dramatic incidents that our ancestors relished in the poet's early days;—A wealthy father, in the last extremity of illness, communicates his testamentary intentions to his three sons. His landed estates are allotted to the eldest, who, overcome with emotion, expresses a fervent wish that the invalid may yet survive to enjoy them himself. To the next, who is a scholar, are left a handsome annuity and a very large sum of money for the purchase of books. Affected equally with his brother, he declares that he has no wish for such gifts, and only hopes that the testator may live to enjoy them himself. The third son, represented by Tarlton, was now summoned to the bed-side, and a grotesque figure he must have appeared in a costume which is described by an eye-witness as including a torn and dirty shirt, a one-sleeved coat, stockings out at heels, and a head-dress

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON, FROM A SKETCH TAKEN IN OR SHORTLY BEFORE THE YEAR 1806.

of feathers and straw. "As for you, sirrah," quoths the indignant parent, "you know how often I have fetched you out of Newgate and Bridewell;—you have been an ungracious villain;—I have nothing to bequeath to you but the gallows and a rope." Following the example of the others, Tarlton bursts into a flood of tears, and then, falling on his knees, sobbingly exclaims,—"O, father, I do not desire them;—I trust to Heaven you shall live to enjoy them yourself."

It may be gathered, from the poet's subsequent history, that his return to Stratford-on-Avon was merely of a temporary character. The actors of those days were, as a rule, individual wanderers, spending a large portion of their time at a distance from their families; and there is every reason for believing that this was the case with Shakespeare from the period of his arrival in London until nearly the end of his life. All the old theatrical companies were more or less of an itinerant character, and it is all but impossible that he should not have already commenced his provincial tours. But what were their directions, or who were his associates, have not been discovered. There is not, indeed, a single particle of evidence respecting his career during the next five years, that is to say, from the time of the Lambert negociation, in 1587, until he is discovered as a rising actor and dramatist in 1592.

This interval must have been the chief period of Shakespeare's literary education. Removed prematurely from school; residing with illiterate relatives in a bookless neighbourhood; thrown into the midst of occupations adverse to scholastic progress—it is difficult to believe that, when he first left Stratford, he was not all but destitute of polished accomplishments. He could not, at

This engraving is taken from a sketch which was made by T. J. Blight, F.S.A., in 1862, *of one of the best specimens of early half-timbered houses then remaining at Stratford-upon-Avon. It is an undoubted genuine example of sixteenth century work.*

all events, under the circumstances in which he had then so long been placed, have had the opportunity of acquiring a refined style of composition. After he had once, however, gained a footing in London, he would have been placed under different conditions. Books of many kinds would have been accessible to him, and he would have been almost daily within hearing of the best dramatic poetry of the age. There would also no doubt have been occasional facilities for picking up a little smattering of the continental languages, and it is almost beyond a doubt that he added somewhat to his classical knowledge during his residence in the metropolis. It is, for instance, hardly possible that the Amores of Ovid, whence he derived his earliest motto, could have been one of his school-books.

Although Shakespeare had exhibited a taste for poetic composition before his first departure from Stratford-on-Avon, all traditions agree in the statement that he was a recognized actor before he joined the ranks of the dramatists. This latter event appears to have occurred on the third of March, 1592, when a new drama, entitled 36
Henry, or Harry, the Sixth, was brought out by Lord Strange's Servants, then acting either at Newington or Southwark under an arrangement with Henslowe, a wealthy stage manager, to whom no doubt the author had sold the play. In this year, as we learn on unquestionable authority, Shakespeare was first rising into 37
prominent notice, so that the history then produced, now known as the First Part of Henry the Sixth, was, in all probability, his earliest complete dramatic work. Its extraordinary success must have secured for the author a substantial position in the theatrical world of the day. The play had, for those times, an unusually long run, so

that Nash, writing in or before the following month of
38 July, states that the performances of it had, in that short interval, been witnessed by "ten thousand spectators at least," and, although this estimate may be overstrained, there can be no hesitation in receiving it as a valid testimony to the singular popularity of the new drama. The Second Part of Henry the Sixth must have appeared soon afterwards, but no record of its production on the stage has been preserved. The former drama was published for
39 the first time in the collective edition of 1623. A garbled
40 and spurious version of the second play, the unskilful work of some one who had not access to a perfect copy of the original, appeared in the year 1594 under the title of the First Part of the Contention betwixt the Houses of York
41 and Lancaster. It was published by Millington, the same bookseller who afterwards issued the surreptitious edition of Henry the Fifth.

Robert Greene, a popular writer and dramatist, who had commenced his literary career nine years previously, died on the third of September, 1592. In a work entitled the Groatsworth of Wit, written shortly before his death, he had travestied, in an interesting sarcastic episode respecting some of his contemporaries, a line from one of Shakespeare's then recent compositions,—*O, tiger's heart, wrapp'd in a woman's hide!* This line
42 is of extreme interest as including the earliest record of words composed by the great dramatist. It forms part of a vigorous speech which is as Shakespearean in its natural characterial fidelity, as it is Marlowean in its diction. That speech of the unfortunate Duke of York's is one of the most striking in the play, and the above line was probably selected for quotation by Greene on account of its popularity through effective delivery. The

quotation shows that the Third Part of Henry the Sixth was written previously to September, 1592, and hence it may be concluded that all Shakespeare's plays on the subject of that reign, although perhaps subsequently revised in a few places by the author, were originally produced in that year. A surreptitious and tinkered 43
version of the Third Part, made up by an inferior hand chiefly out of imperfect materials, appeared in 1595 under the title of the Tragedy of Richard Duke of York, and therein stated to have been "sundry times acted by the Earl of Pembroke's servants." 44

There is no reason for wonder in the style of a young author being influenced by that of a popular and accomplished contemporary, and judgment on the authorship of much of the above-named plays should not be ruled by a criticism which can only fairly be applied to the rapidly approaching period when the great dramatist had outlived the possibility of appearing in the character 45
of an imitative writer. That Shakespeare commenced his literary vocation as, to some extent, a follower of Marlowe can hardly be denied, even were the line quoted by Greene the only remnant of his early plays ; and that the three parts of Henry the Sixth had been some years on the stage, when Henry the Fifth was produced in 1599, may be gathered from that interesting relic of literary autobiography, the final chorus to the latter play. No theory respecting the history of the former dramas is wholly free from embarrassing perplexities, but that which best agrees with the positive evidences is that which concedes the authorship of the three plays to Shakespeare, their production to the year 1592, and the quarto editions 46
of the Second and Third Parts as vamped, imperfect, and blundering versions of the poet's own original dramas. 47

The Groatsworth of Wit was published very soon after the unfortunate writer's decease, that is to say, it appeared towards the end of September, 1592 ; and it is clear that one portion of it had been composed under the influence of a profound jealousy of Shakespeare. Greene is addressing his fellow-dramatists, and speaking of the actors of their plays, thus introduces his satirical observations on the author of the Third Part of Henry the Sixth, with a travesty of the line above mentioned,—"trust them not, for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that, with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide*, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you ; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is, in his owne conceit, the onely Shake-scene in a countrie." It was natural that these impertinent remarks should have annoyed the object of them, and that they were so far effective may be gathered from an interesting statement made by the editor, Henry Chettle, in a work of his own, entitled Kind-Heart's Dream, that he published a few weeks afterwards, in which he specially regrets that the attack had proved offensive to Shakespeare, whom, he observes, —"at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that, as I have moderated the heate of living writers, and might have usde my owne discretion, especially in such a case, the author beeing dead, that I did not I am as sory as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because myselfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill than he exelent in the qualitie he professes ; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that aprooves his art." Apologies of this kind are so apt to be overstrained that we can hardly

gather more from the present one than the respectable position Shakespeare held as a writer and actor, and that Chettle, having made his acquaintance, was desirous of keeping friends with one who was beginning to be appreciated by the higher classes of society. The 236
annoyance, however, occasioned by Greene's posthumous criticism was soon forgotten by the poet amidst the 118
triumphs of his subsequent career.

Removing now the scene of our fragmentary history from the metropolis to the country, we find, at the time of Greene's lampoonry, the poet's father busily engaged with his counters in appraising the goods of one Henry Field, a tanner of Stratford-on-Avon, whose inventory, attached to his will, was taken in August, 1592. This tradesman's son, Richard, who was apprenticed to a printer in London in the year 1579, took up his freedom in 1587, and soon afterwards commenced business on his own account, an elegant copy of Ovid's Metamorphoses, 1589, being amongst the numerous works that issued from his press. It is most likely, indeed all but certain, that Shakespeare participated in his father's acquaintance with the printer's relatives, and at all events there was the provincial tie, so specially dear to Englishmen when at a distance from the town of their birth, between the poet and Richard Field. When, therefore, the latter is discovered, early in the year 1593, engaged in the production of Venus and Adonis, it is only reasonable to infer that the author had a control over the typographical arrangements. The purity of the text and the nature of the dedication may be thought to strengthen this opinion, and although poems were not then generally introduced to the public in the same glowing terms usually accorded to dramatic pieces, the singularly brief and anonymous

VENVS
AND ADONIS

Vilia miretur vulgus: mihi flauus Apollo
Pocula Caſtalia plena miniſtret aqua.

LONDON
Imprinted by Richard Field, and are to be ſold at
the ſigne of the white Greyhound in
Paules Church-yard.
1593.

Upon the opposite page is a facsimile of the title of Shakespeare's earliest printed work, one which was introduced to the public by the following most interesting dedication. The latter is the author's first undramatic prose composition which is known to exist.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE
Henrie VVriothesley, Earle of Southampton,
and Baron of Titchfield.

Right Honourable, I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my vnpolisht lines to your Lordship, nor how the worlde vvill censure mee for choosing so strong a proppe to support so vweake a burthen, onelye if your Honour seeme but pleased, I account my selfe highly praised, and vowe to take aduantage of all idle houres, till I haue honoured you vvith some grauer labour. But if the first heire of my inuention proue deformed, I shall be sorie it had so noble a god-father: and neuer after eare so barren a land, for feare it yeeld me still so bad a harueſt, I leaue it to your Honourable ſuruey, and your Honor to your hearts content, vvhich I wiſh may alvvaies anſvvere your ovvne vviſh, and the vvorlds hopefull expectation.

Your Honors in all dutie,

William Shakespeare.

title-page does not bear the appearance of a publisher's handywork. Field, however, registered the copyright to
92 himself on April the 18th, and the work was offered for sale, at the White Greyhound in St. Paul's Churchyard, by his friend, John Harrison, the publisher of the first three editions, and who next year became the owner both of the Venus and Lucrece. It may be well to record that the publication had what was probably the vicarious sanction of no less an individual than the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, although no Puritan, would scarcely have considered its exquisite versification sufficient to
93 atone for its voluptuous character.

The poem of Venus and Adonis, which was favorably
94 received and long continued to be the most popular book of the kind, is termed by the author "the first heir of my invention." If these words are to be literally interpreted, it must have been written in or before the year 1592; but Shakespeare may be referring only to works of a strictly poetical character, which were then held in far higher estimation than dramatic compositions. However that may be, the oft-repeated belief that Venus and Adonis was a production of his younger days at Stratford-on-Avon can hardly be sustained. It is extremely improbable that an epic, so highly finished and so completely devoid of patois, could have been produced under the circumstances of his then domestic surroundings, while, moreover, the notion is opposed to the best and earliest traditional opinions. It is also to be observed that there is nothing in the Dedication in favour of such a conjecture, although the fact, had it been one, would
95 have formed a ready and natural defence against the writer's obvious timidity. The work was inscribed, apparently without permission, to Lord Southampton, a

young nobleman then only in his twentieth year, who about this time had commenced to exhibit a special disposition to encourage the rising authors of the metropolis.

Literature, in Shakespeare's time, was nearly the only passport of the lower and middle class to the countenance and friendship of the great. It was no wonder that the poet, in days when interest was all but omnipotent, should have wished to secure the advantages that could hardly fail to be derived from a special association with an individual in the favoured position, and with the exceptionally generous character, of Lord Southampton. Wealthy, accomplished and romantic,—with a temperament that could listen to a metrical narrative of the follies of Venus without yielding to hysterics,—the young nobleman was presumably the most eligible dedicatee that Shakespeare could have desired for the introduction of his first poem to the literary world. It is evident, however, that, when he was penning the inscription to Venus and Adonis, whatever presentiment he may have entertained on the subject, he was by no means sure that his lordship would give a friendly reception to, much less so that he would be gratified by, the intended compliment. But all doubts upon these points were speedily removed, and little more than a twelvemonth elapsed before the poet is found warmly attached to Lord Southampton, and eagerly taking the opportunity, in his second address, of tendering his gratitude for favours conferred in the interval.

Although the plague was raging violently in London at the time, and theatrical performances were forbidden, the companies do not appear to have entered upon their rural tours until shortly after the publication of Venus and Adonis. It is very likely, therefore, that

LON
Islington
The way to Hornsey
Grayes Inn
Holborn
Creple gate
Ludgate
Leicester howse
The temple
Whyte fryers
Bridewell
Black fryers
Baynards castle
Paules wharfe
Broken wharfe
Queene hythe
Three cranes
THAMYS
Bankes syde
Lambeth mersh
The Beare howse
The play howse
Pieter Vanden Keere fecit 1593

DON
Scala paſſuum. ſ pedum
80 160 240 320 400 480
More fyldes
Spittle fyldes
Bishops gate
S. Botolph
Aldgate
East Smithfyld
Tower
Lion kaye
Bellyns gate
Galley kaye
The towre
S Katherynes
fluuius
The Billiards
Olde Iwry
S Maryé Overyes
S. Towleyes
South warke
20
21

Shakespeare was in town when his manuscript was at the printer's, and not impossible that he glanced over the proof-sheets, besides superintending the general arrangement of the work. While the poet was or may have been thus engaged, it is curious that John Norden, the only really able surveyor of the day, should have chosen this dangerous season for the formation of an elaborate plan of the metropolis. Little could the worthy draughtsman have imagined that the main value of his labours would have consisted in their telling posterity something about the city that was traversed by the youthful poet. Yet so it was to be, and the nature of London, as it existed between the years 1587 and 1616, has become of national interest. There it was, with its dense mass of thickly-peopled houses within the walls, and, outside that limited area, what may perhaps be fitly described as partial suburbs of a like crowded description and scattered fragments of provincial towns. A walk of about a mile and a half would have taken the great dramatist from his
385 apartment in Southwark right through London to the northern theatres, each termination of this little distance being practically in the country. The deadly epidemic, however, being at this period especially virulent in Shoreditch, it is most likely that Shakespeare was then keeping away as much as possible from that locality, and that he was occupied elsewhere in completing his literary engagements in view of an approaching professional tour. Crossing the river by boat and landing at the Blackfriars Stairs, he would have been within a few minutes' walk of Field's printing-office, near Ludgate, where the types of Venus and Adonis were being set up. That house was close to all the leading publishers of the day, and a reference to Norden's map will show how very circumscribed was

the space in which his metropolitan business of all kinds must have been transacted,—how small was the world to which his first poem was chiefly addressed. Although this interesting plan, here engraved in fac-simile, is not 58
quite accurate in some of its measurements, there is no doubt of its general fidelity, and that it gives the reader a better idea of Shakespeare's London than could be conveyed by written description. It should be observed that the circular building, there noted as "the play-howse," is the Rose, the theatre in which his earliest dramas were produced. The Theatre and the Curtain stood in the fields to the left of the road which leads upwards from Bishopsgate, but most unfortunately the limits of the plan just suffices for the exclusion of those interesting structures.

In the winter-season of 1593-4, Shakespeare's earliest tragedy, which was, unfortunately, based on a repulsive tale, was brought out by the Earl of Sussex's actors, who were then performing, after a tour in the provinces, at one of the Surrey theatres. They were either hired by, or playing under some financial arrangement with, Henslowe, who, after the representation of a number of revivals, ventured upon the production of a drama on the story of Titus Andronicus, the only new play introduced 24
during the season. This tragedy, having been successfully produced before a large audience on January the 23rd, 25
1594, was shortly afterwards entered on the books of the Stationers' Company and published by Danter. It was also performed, almost if not quite simultaneously, by the servants of the Earls of Derby and Pembroke. 112
Thus it appears that Shakespeare, up to this period, had written all his dramas for Henslowe, and that they were acted, under the sanction of that manager, by

the various companies performing from 1592 to 1594 at the Rose Theatre and Newington Butts. The acting copies of Titus Andronicus and the three parts of Henry the Sixth must of course have been afterwards transferred by Henslowe to the Lord Chamberlain's company.

Hideous and repulsive as the story of Tamora and the Andronici is now considered, it was anything but repugnant to the taste of the general public in Henslowe's day. Neither was it regarded as out of the pale of the legitimate drama by the most cultivated, otherwise so able a scholar and critic as Meres would hardly, several years after the appearance of Titus Andronicus, have inserted its title amongst those of the noteworthy tragedies of Shakespeare. The audiences of Elizabeth's time revelled in the very crudity of the horrible, so much so that nearly every kind of bodily torture and mutilation, or even more revolting incidents, formed part of the stock business of the theatre. Murders were in special request in all kinds of serious dramas. Wilson, one of Lord Leicester's servants, was thought in 1581 to be just the person to write a play then urgently desired, which was not only to "be original and amusing," but was also to include "plenty of mystery," and "be full of all sorts of murders, immorality, and robberies." Nor was the taste for the predominance of the worst kind of sensational incidents restricted to the public stage, as any one may see who will care to peruse the Misfortunes of Arthur, produced with great flourish by the students of Gray's Inn in 1588. This deplorable fancy was nearly in its zenith at the time of the appearance of Titus Andronicus. In the same year, 1594, there was published the Tragicall Raigne of Selimus, Emperour of the Turkes, a composition

offering similar attractions, but the writer was so afraid of his massacres being considered too insipid, he thus reveals his misgivings to the audience,—

> If this First Part, gentles, do like you well,
> The Second Part shall greater murders tell.

The character of the theatrical speculations of Henslowe was obviously influenced, in common with that of nearly all managers, by the current tastes of the public, and, in an age like the one now spoken of, is it wonderful that he should have considered the story of Titus Andronicus a fit theme for the dramatist? Is it also marvellous that Shakespeare, a young author then struggling into position, should not have felt it his duty, on æsthetic grounds, to reject an offer the acceptance of which invited no hostile criticism, while it opened out a prospect of material advantages? Henslowe's judgment, regulated by thoughts of the money-box, not by those of attempted reforms of the drama, were no doubt in his own opinion amply justified by the result. A certain deference to the expectations of a popular audience is, indeed, nearly always essential to the continuous support of a theatre, and it is not unlikely that the very incidents now so offensive were those which mainly contributed to the success of the tragedy. As for the poet's share in the transaction, we are too apt to consider it indefensible under any measure of temptation, without reflecting to what extent a familiarity with representative horrors might produce an unconscious indifference to their ghastliness even in the tenderest of natures. Such horrors belong to the taste of the age, not to that of the individual. We must try to reconcile ourselves, as best we may, to the obvious fact that Shakespeare did not always consider it

239 necessary to deviate from the course of his foundation-tales for the sake of avoiding the barbarities of the ancient stage. Had it been otherwise, the story of Titus Andronicus might have been purified, and we also mercifully spared from a contemplation of the appalling eye-scene in the tragedy of Lear.

No discussion on either of the last-named plays, or on many of the others, can be satisfactorily conducted so long as the influences of the older drama, and the theatric usages of the time, are not ever carefully borne in mind. It is a fallacy to admit, with many, the necessity of true criticism being grounded upon a reverential belief that the whole of Shakespeare's plays, in the forms in which they have descended to us, are examples of the unvarying perfection of the writer's judgment and dramatic art. That he was endowed with an exquisite judgment there is ample evidence, but that it was not always utilized is equally indisputable. It is obvious that, in several instances, when vivifying some of the most popular old English dramas, he was contented to transfer irrational plots and defective constructions that had been firmly established in public favour. The latter were sometimes adopted without an effort to bring them into harmony with the conduct of the action; and there appears to have been generally a disinclination on his part to originate either plots or incidents. So numerous were the popular and other tales that were suited for contemporary dramatic purposes, there was, as a rule, no theatrical necessity for his inventing either; while the creation of a new story, never an easy and generally a hazardous task for a dramatist, might have been more trouble to him than the composition of a play. Shakespeare was leading a busy life, and there are no indications that he would have

delayed the completion of any one of his works for the sake of art. It should be remembered that his dramas were not written for posterity, but as a matter of business, never for his own speculation but always for that of the managers of the theatre, the choice of subject being occasionally dictated by them or by patrons of the stage; his task having been to construct out of certain given or elected materials successful dramas for the audiences of the day. It is not pretended that he did not invariably take an earnest interest in his work, his intense sympathy with each character forbidding such an assumption; but simply that his other tastes were subordinated when necessary to his duty to his employers. If the managers considered that the popular feeling was likely to encourage, or if an influential patron or the Court desired, the production of a drama on some special theme, it was composed to order on that subject, no matter how repulsive the character of the plot or how intrinsically it was unfitted for dramatic purposes. Working thus under the domination of a commercial spirit, it is impossible to say to 193
what extent his work was affected by unfavourable influences; such, for example, as the necessity of finishing a drama with undue haste, the whole, as it may have been, especially in his early days, written under disturbing circumstances in the room of a noisy tavern or in an inconvenient lodging that served him for "parlour, kitchen, and hall." And, again, besides the incongruities derived from the older plays or novels, his control over his art was occasionally liable to be governed by the customs and exigencies of the ancient stage, so much so that, in a few instances, the action of a scene was diverted for the express purpose of complying with those necessities. From some of these causes may have arisen

simultaneous inequalities in taste and art which otherwise appear to be inexplicable, and which would doubtlessly have been removed had Shakespeare lived to have given the public a revised edition of his works during his retirement at Stratford-on-Avon, and had also wished to display that uniformity of excellence which he alone, of all prolific writers, might have achieved.

The Burbages, however, had no conception of his intellectual supremacy, and, if they had, it is certain that they would not have deviated on that account from the course they were in the habit of pursuing. In their estimation, however, he was merely, to use their own words, a "deserving man," an effective actor and a popular writer, one who would not have been considered so valuable a member of their staff had he not also worked as a practical man of business, knowing that the success of the theatre was identified with his own, and that, within certain limits, it was necessary that his art should be regulated by expediency. There is, indeed, no evidence that Shakespeare wrote, at any period of his life, without a constant reference to the immediate effect of his dramas upon the theatrical public of his own day; and it may reasonably be suspected that there is not one of them which is the result of an express or cherished literary design. He was sometimes, moreover, in such a hurry of composition that a reference to the original foundation-story is necessary for the complete elucidation of his meaning, another circumstance which is incompatible with a resolute desire for the construction of perfect artistic work. This is one of the several indications which lead to the high probability that his theatrical success was neither the result of a devotion to art, nor of a solicitude for the eulogy of readers, but of

his unrivalled power of characterization, of his intimate knowledge of stage business, and of a fidelity to mental nature that touched the hearts of all. These qualities, although less prominently developed in Titus Andronicus than in many other of his plays, are yet to be observed in that inferior work. Even amidst its display of barbarous and abandoned personages, neither sternness nor profligacy is permitted to altogether extinguish the natural emotions, while, at the same time, the unities of character are well sustained. It is by tests such as these, 22c
not by counting its syllables or analyzing its peculiarities of style, that the authenticity of Shakespeare's earliest 26
tragedy should be determined.

Although it is dangerous nowadays to enter upon the history of Shakespeare's art with the language of common-sense, the risk must be encountered if we are not contented to lose interesting examples of the poet's youthful genius. If, indeed, all is to be discarded that offends the extra-judicial taste of modern purists, the object of our idolatry will be converted into a king of dramatic shreds and patches. The evil arises from the practice of discussing the intricacies of that art without reference to the conditions under which it was evolved. Those which have been above-mentioned will go far to explain many difficulties, and especially the singular variations of power that are occasionally to be traced in one and the same drama. A few words on the general question may now be added. In one sense, that of being the delineator of the passions and character, Shakespeare was the greatest artist that ever lived, as he was also in melody, in humour, and in all kinds of dramatic expression. But in another and very usual meaning of that personal term, in that of being an elaborator intent on rendering his component

work artistically faultless in the eye of criticism, he can hardly be thought to have even a slight claim to the title. When Ben Jonson told Drummond of Hawthornden, in 1619, that "Shakespeare wanted art," he referred no doubt to his general negligence in the latter respect, and perhaps especially to his occasional defects in construction. One of Shakespeare's most wonderful gifts was his unlimited power of a characterial invention to suit any kind of plot, no matter how ill-devised, and, at the same time harmonize with theatrical expediencies, however incongruous, which might have been considered by the managers or actors to have been essential to the maintenance of popularity. "His wit," observes the same Rare Ben, dissatisfied with what he no doubt thought a reckless mode of composition, "was in his own power;—would *the rule* of it had been so too!" It was natural that Jonson, with his reverence for classical models, should regard his great contemporary's indifference to them with dismay. But Shakespeare, endowed with an universal genius, created his personages by unfettered instinct, and, most happily, the times and circumstances were alike favourable to the development of the dramatic power by which alone the perfect results of that genius could have been exhibited. Commencing his public life as an actor, he had the inestimable advantage of gaining a preliminary
259 knowledge of all that was most likely to be effective on the stage, the then conventionalities of which, moreover, by their very simplicity, and notwithstanding one or two drawbacks, were eminently calculated for the fullest exercise of an author's poetic and imaginative faculties. Then there was a language which, having for some time past been emancipated from the influence of literal terminations, had attained a form that gave matchless

facilities for the display of nervous expression, and this in the brightest period of earnest and vigorous English thought. That language found in Shakespeare its felicitous and unrivalled exponent, and although on occasions his words either imperfectly represent the thought or are philologically erroneous, becoming thus to mere readers inextricably obscure, it may be confidently averred that there is not one speech, the essential meanings of which, if it were properly delivered, would not have been directly intelligible to the auditory. He had also ready prepared to his hands the matured outward form of a drama, its personages and their histories, all waiting for the hand that was to endow them with grace and life. It was then his unconscious mission through the most effective agency, that of the stage, to interpret human nature to the people. That interpretation was fortunately neither cramped nor distorted by the necessity of adherence to literary rule, while the popular tastes sanctioned its uncontrolled application to every variety of character, through all kinds of probable or improbable situation,—before fairy-land had been exiled, and the thunder of fie-foh-fum had lost its solemnity. Writing first for a living, and then for affluence, his sole aim was to please an audience, most of whom, be it remembered, were not only illiterate, but unable to either read or write. But this very ignorance of the large majority of his public, so far from being a disadvantage, enabled him to disregard restrictive canons and the tastes of scholars,—to make that appeal to the heart and intellect which can only be universal when it reaches the intuitive perceptions of the lowliest,—and by exhibiting his marvellous conceptions in the pristine form in which they had instinctively emanated,

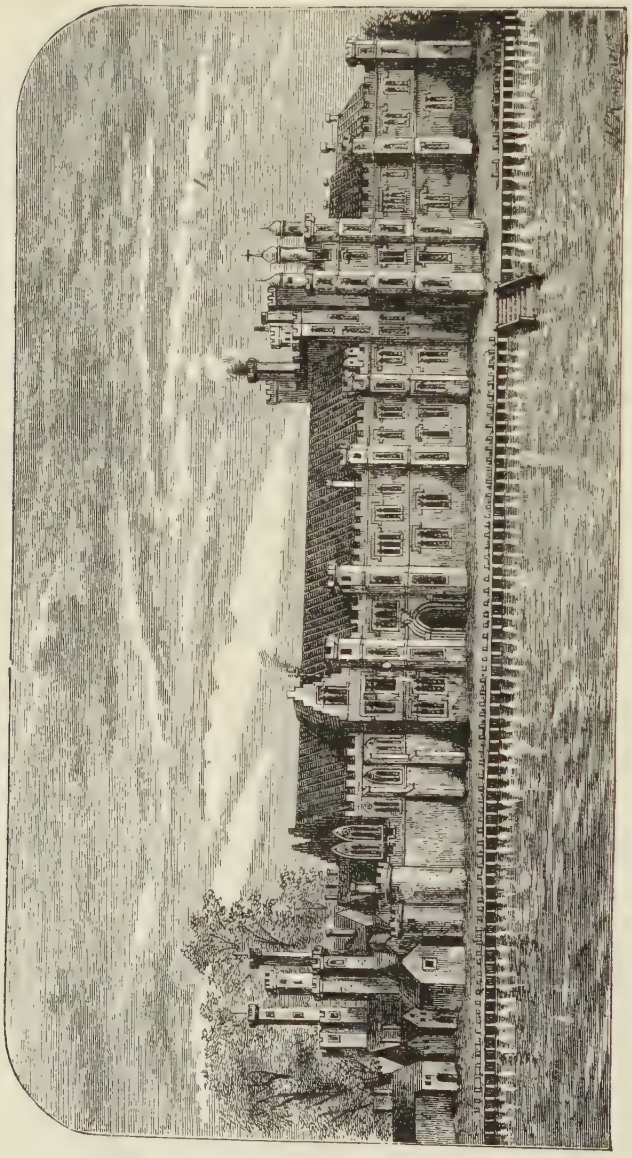
become the poet of nature instead of the poet of art. That Shakespeare wrote without effort, by inspiration
232 not by design, was, so far as it has been recorded, the unanimous belief of his contemporaries and immediate successors. It was surely to this comprehensive truth, and not exclusively to the natural music of his verse, that Milton referred when, in two of the most exquisite lines respecting him that were ever penned, he speaks of Fancy's child warbling "his native wood-notes wild." If those notes had been cabined by philosophy and methodically cultivated, they might have been as intrinsically powerful, but they would assuredly have lost much of their present charm.

It cannot be absolutely observed of Shakespeare, as it has been of another great poet, that he woke up one morning to discover that he was famous, but there is reason for believing that the publication of his Lucrece, in the May of this year, 1594, almost immediately secured for its author a higher reputation than would then have been established by the most brilliant efforts of dramatic art. This magnificent poem, which was originally proposed to be entitled the Ravishment of Lucrece, must have been written after the Dedication to Venus and Adonis, and before the entry of the former work at Stationers' Hall, that is to say, at some time between April, 1593, and May, 1594. There can be no doubt of the estimation in which it was held in the year of publication, the author of an elegy on Lady Helen Branch, 1594, including amongst our *greater poetes*, —"you that have writ of chaste Lucretia,=whose death was witnesse of her spotlesse life;" and Drayton, in his Matilda, of the same date, speaking of Lucrece, "lately reviv'd to live another
108 age." Shakespeare's new poem is also mentioned in

Willobie's Avisa, published in September, 1594, the earliest contemporary work in which he is introduced by name; and in the following year, "Lucrecia—sweet Shakespeare," is a marginal note to Polimanteia, 1595, one which implies that it was then considered his best work. Later references testify its continued appreciation, and it was received as the perfect exposition of woman's 109
chastity, a sequel, or rather perhaps a companion, to the earlier one of her profligacy. The contemporaries of Shakespeare allude more than once to the two poems as being his most important works, and as those on which his literary distinction chiefly rested.

The prefixes to the Venus and Lucrece are, in the presence of so few biographical memorials, inestimable records of their author. The two dedications to Lord Southampton and the argument to the second work are the only non-dramatic prose compositions of Shakespeare that have descended to modern times, while the former are, alas, the sole remaining samples of his epistolary writings. The latter are of course by far the more interesting, and, making allowances for the inordinate deference to rank which then prevailed, they are perfect examples of the judicious fusion of independence with courtesy in a suggestive application for a favour, and in expressions of gratitude for its concession.

In the June of this same year, 1594, Titus Andronicus was performed at Newington Butts by the Lord Chamberlain's, then acting in conjunction with the Lord Admiral's, Servants, the poet most likely taking a part in the representation. The earliest definite notice, however, of his appearance on the stage, is one in which he is recorded as having been a player in two comedies that were acted before Queen Elizabeth in the following December,



GREENWICH PALACE, WHERE SHAKESPEARE ACTED BEFORE QUEEN ELIZABETH IN THE YEAR 1594.

The fact of Shakespeare having performed before Queen Elizabeth in December, 1594, is established by the following entry recorded in the manuscript accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber,—"to William Kempe, William Shakespeare and Richarde Burbage, servauntes to the Lord Chamberleyne, upon the Councelles warrant dated at Whitehall xv. to Marcij, 1594, for twoe severall comedies or enterludes shewed by them before her Majestie in Christmas tyme laste paste, viz., upon St. Stephens daye and Innocentes daye xiij. *li.* vj. *s.* viij. *d*, and by waye of her Majesties rewarde vj. *li.* xiij. *s.* iiij. *d*, in all xx. *li.*" The Court was then at Greenwich Palace. "For making ready at Grenewich for the Qu. Majestie against her Highnes coming thether, by the space of viij. daies mense Decembr., 1594, as appereth by a bill signed by the Lord Chamberleyne, viij. *li.* xiij. *s.* iiij. *d*," MS. ibid. "To Tho: Sheffeilde, under-keaper of her Majesties house at Grenewich for thallowaunce of viij. labourers there three severall nightes, at xij. *d* the man, by reason it was night-woorke, for making cleane the greate chamber, the Presence, the galleries and clossettes, mense Decembr., 1594, xxiiij. *s*," MS. ibid. The view of the Palace here introduced is taken from one on a much larger scale which was engraved by Basire from an ancient drawing, and published in 1767. This is believed to be the only authentic representation of the building as it appeared at the time of Shakespeare's visit. There are a number of views belonging to other periods, and an engraving of modern date purporting to represent it, but the last is really from a sketch of a large Elizabethan mansion which formerly stood in the immediate neighbourhood.

at Greenwich Palace. He was then described as one of the Lord Chamberlain's Servants, and was associated in the performances with Kemp and Burbage, the former of whom was the most favourite comedian of the day. It is not known to what company or companies Shakespeare belonged previously to his adhesion to the one last named; but the probabilities are these.—It is well ascertained that Henslowe was an exceedingly grasping manager, and it is, therefore, most unlikely that he would have speculated in new plays that were not intended for immediate use. We may then fairly assume that every drama composed for him would be, in the first instance, produced by the actors that occupied his theatre when the manuscript was purchased. Now, as Shakespeare was an actor as well as a dramatist, there is an inclination towards the belief that he would have been engaged at Henslowe's theatre when employed to write for that personage, and, if we accept the theory of early production, would have belonged to those companies by whom the first representations of his dramas were given. If
194 this view be taken, it would appear not altogether unlikely that the poet was one of Lord Strange's actors in March, 1592; one of Lord Pembroke's a few months later; and that he had joined the company of the Earl of Sussex in or before January, 1594.

There were rare doings at Gray's Inn in the Christmas holidays of the year last mentioned. The students of that house had usually excelled in their festive arrangements, and now they were making preparations for revels on a scale of exceptional magnificence, sports that were to include burlesque performances, masques, plays and dances, as well as processions through London and on the Thames. A mock Court was held at the Inn under

the presidency of one Henry Helmes, a Norfolk gentleman, who was elected Prince of Purpoole, the ancient name of the manor, other students being elected to serve under him in all the various offices then appertaining to royalty and government. The grand entertainment of all was arranged for the evening of Innocent's Day, December the 28th, on which occasion high scaffolds had been erected in the hall for the accommodation of the revellers and the principal guests, a large number of the latter having received invitations. Amongst the guests, the students of the Inner Temple, joining in the humour of their professional neighbours, and appearing as an embassy credited by their Emperor, arrived about nine o'clock "very gallantly appointed." The ambassador, we are told, was "brought in very solemnly, with sound of trumpets, the King-at-Arms and Lords of Purpoole making to his company, which marched before him in order;—he was received very kindly by the Prince, and placed in a chair beside his Highness, to the end that he might be partaker of the sports intended." Complimentary addresses were then exchanged between the Prince and the Ambassador, but, owing to defective arrangements for a limitation of the number of those entitled to admission on the stage, there followed a scene of confusion which ended in the Templarians retiring in dudgeon. "After their departure," as we are told in the original narrative, "the throngs and tumults did somewhat cease, although so much of them continued as was able to disorder and confound any good inventions whatsoever; in regard whereof, as also for that the sports intended were especially for the gracing of the Templarians, it was thought good not to offer anything of account saving dancing and revelling with gentlewomen;

76 and, after such sports, a Comedy of Errors, like to Plautus his Menechmus, was played by the players; so that night was begun and continued to the end in nothing but confusion and errors, whereupon it was ever afterwards called the Night of Errors." This is the earliest notice of the comedy which has yet been discovered, but that it was written before the year 1594 may be inferred from an allusion in it to the civil war for and against Henry the Fourth, the Protestant heir to the French throne, a contest which terminated in 1593.

The spacious and elegant open-roofed hall of Gray's Inn, the erection of which was completed in the year 1560, is one of the only two buildings now remaining in London in which, so far as we know, any of the plays of Shakespeare were performed in his own time. In accordance with the then usual custom of the Inns of Court, professional actors were engaged for the representation of the Comedy of Errors, and although their names are not mentioned, it may be safely inferred that the play was acted by the Lord Chamberlain's Company, that to which Shakespeare was then attached, and the owners of the copyright. The performance must have taken place very late on the night following the day in which the poet had appeared before Queen Elizabeth at Greenwich. On the next evening there was a Commission of Oyer and Terminer at Gray's Inn to enquire into the circumstances of the misfortunes of the previous night, the cause of the tumult being assigned to the intervention of a sorcerer; but it is hardly pleasant to be told, even in burlesque, that this personage was accused of having "foisted a company of base and common fellows to make up our disorders with a play of errors and confusions." The Comedy of Errors, the

perfection of dramatic farce, long continued an acting play, it having been performed before James the First on December the 28th, 1604.

When Greene thought to be sarcastic in terming Shakespeare "an absolute Johannes Factotum," he furnished an independent and valuable testimony to the poet's conspicuous activity. It is but reasonable to assume that part of this energy in theatrical matters was devoted, in accordance with the ordinary practice of the time, to the revision and enlargement of the plays of others, work then assigned by managers to any convenient hands, without reference to sentimental views of authorial integrity. No record, however, has been discovered of the name of even one drama so treated by Shakespeare in the early period of his career, so that, if any such composition is preserved, the identification necessarily depends upon the tests of internal evidence. These are valueless in the chief direction, for there is surely not a known possible example in which is to be traced the incontestible supremacy of dramatic power that would on that account sanction the positive attribution of even one of its scenes to the pen of the great dramatist. Other tests, such as those of phraseology and mannerism, are nearly always illusory, but in an anonymous and popular 242
drama entitled the Reign of King Edward the Third, produced in or before the year 1595, there are occasional passages which, by most judgments, will be accepted as having been written either by Shakespeare, or by an exceedingly dexterous and successful imitator of one of his then favourite styles of composition. For who but one or the other could have endowed a kind and gentle lady with the ability of replying to the impertinent addresses of a foolish sovereign in words such as these,—

As easy may my intellectual soul
Be lent away, and yet my body live,
As lend my body, palace to my soul,
Away from her, and yet retain my soul.
My body is her bower, her court, her abbey,
And she an angel,—pure, divine, unspotted!
If I should lend her house, my lord, to thee,
I kill my poor soul, and my poor soul me.

or have enabled the king, when instinctively acknowledging the dread effect of her beauty, to thus express a wish that "ugly treason" might lie,—

No farther off than her conspiring eye,
Which shoots infected poison in my heart,
Beyond repulse of wit or cure of art.
Now in the sun alone it doth not lie,
With light to take light from a mortal eye;
For here two day-stars, that mine eyes would see,
More than the sun steal mine own light from me.
Contemplative desire!—desire to be
In contemplation that may master thee.

or have made the royal secretary convey his impression of the lady's conquest in the following lines,—

I might perceive his eye in her eye lost,
His ear to drink her sweet tongue's utterance;
And changing passion, like inconstant clouds,
That rackt upon the carriage of the winds,
Increase and die in his disturbed cheeks.
Lo! when she blush'd even then did he look pale,
As if her cheeks, by some enchanted power,
Attracted had the cherry blood from his.
Anon, with reverent fear, when she grew pale,
His cheeks put on their scarlet ornaments,
But no more like her oriental red
Than brick to coral, or live things to dead.

but, as it is possible that Edward the Third was composed

some time before the year 1595, it may, of course, be assumed that Shakespeare himself was the imitator, in his own acknowledged works, of the style of the writer of this anonymous play, or of that of some other author, the predecessor of both. Not one in fifty of the dramas of this period having descended to modern times, much of the reasoning upon this and similar questions must be received with grave suspicion of its validity, and the exact history of the composition of the play above quoted will most likely remain for ever a mystery. If, however, it is thought probable that Shakespeare's career of imitation expired with his treading in some of the footsteps of Marlowe, and that he had not, at the latest time when Edward the Third could have appeared, achieved a popularity sufficient to attract imitators of his own style, then there will be at least an excusable surmise that his work is to be traced in parts of that historical drama. Every now and then one meets in it with passages, especially in the scenes referring to the King's infatuation for the Countess of Salisbury, which are so infinitely superior in composition to the rest of the play, and so exactly in Shakespeare's manner, this presumption, under the above-named premises, can scarcely be avoided. Whether this view be accepted or not, Edward the Third will, under any circumstances, be indissolubly connected with the literary history of the great dramatist, for one of its lines is also found in his ninety-fourth sonnet. As the last-named poem, even if it had been written as early as 1595, was not printed for many years afterwards, it is unlikely that the line in question could have been transplanted from the sonnet into the play by any one but Shakespeare himself, who, however, might have reversed the operation, whether he were or were not the

original author of the words. This is the passage in the drama in which the line of the sonnet is introduced,—

> A spacious field of reasons could I urge
> Between his gloomy daughter and thy shame,—
> That poison shows worst in a golden cup;
> Dark night seems darker by the lightning flash;
> *Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds;*
> And every glory that inclines to sin,
> The shame is treble by the opposite.

In the summer of the year 1596, upon the death of the Lord Chamberlain on July the 22nd, the company of actors to which the poet belonged became the servants of that nobleman's eldest son, Lord Hunsdon, and one
52 of the first dramas selected by them, while in their new position, was Shakespeare's tragedy of Romeo and Juliet,
53 which was produced at the Curtain Theatre and met with great success. Romeo and Juliet may be said, indeed, to have taken the metropolis by storm and to have become
54 *the* play of the season. Its popularity led to the compilation of an imperfect and unauthorized edition which issued from Danter's press in the following year, one got up in such haste that two founts of type were engaged in its composition. In 1599, Cuthbert Burby, a bookseller, whose shop was near the Royal Exchange, published the tragedy with the overstrained announcement that it had been "newly corrected, augmented and amended." This is the version of the drama which is now accepted, and it appears to be an authentic copy of the tragedy produced in 1596, after a few passages in the latter had been revised by the author. The long-continued popularity of Romeo and Juliet may
55 be inferred from several early allusions, as well as from the express testimony of Leonard Digges, but it is

rather singular that the author's name is not mentioned in any of the old editions until some time after the year 1609. An interesting tradition respecting one of the characters in this tragedy is recorded in 1672 by Dryden, who observes that the great dramatist "showed the best of his skill in his Mercutio, and he said himself that he was forced to kill him in the third act, to prevent being killed by him." The eminent narrator of this little anecdote ingenuously adds, — "but, for my part, I cannot find he was so dangerous a person ;—I see nothing in him but what was so exceeding harmless that he might have lived to the end of the play, and died in his bed, without offence to any man."

A severe domestic affliction marred the pleasure that the author might otherwise have derived from his last-mentioned triumph. His only son Hamnet, then in his twelfth year, died early in August, 1596, and was buried at Stratford-on-Avon on the eleventh of that month. At the close of the year the poet also lost his uncle Henry, the farmer of Snitterfield, during the same Christmas holidays in which his company had the honour of performing on two occasions before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall Palace.

No positive information on the subject has been recorded, but the few evidences there are lead to the belief that the Shakespeare family continued, throughout his life, to reside in the poet's native town. They had not accompanied him in his first visit to the metropolis, and, from the circumstance of the burial of Hamnet at Stratford-on-Avon, it may be confidently inferred that they were living there at the time of the poor youth's decease. It is in the highest degree unlikely that they could have taken up an abode anywhere else but in London, and no hint is given of the latter having been the case. Let it also be

borne in mind that Shakespeare's occupations debarred him from the possibility of his sustaining even an approach to a continuous domestic life, so that, when his known attachment to Stratford is taken into consideration, it seems all but certain that his wife and children were but waiting there under economical circumstances, perhaps with his parents in Henley Street, until he could provide them with a comfortable residence of their own. Every particular that is known indicates that he admitted no disgrace in the irresponsible persecution which occasioned his retreat to London, and that he persistently entertained the wish to make Stratford his and his family's only permanent home. This desire was too confirmed to be materially affected even by the death of his only son, for, shortly after that event, he is discovered taking a fancy to one of the largest houses in the town, and becoming its purchaser in the following year. At this time, 1596, he appears to have been residing, when in town, in lodgings near the Bear Garden in Southwark.

There is preserved at the College of Arms the draft of a grant of coat-armour to John Shakespeare, dated in October, 1596, the result of an application made no doubt some little time previously. It may be safely inferred, from the unprosperous circumstances of the grantee, that this attempt to confer gentility on the family was made at the poet's expense. This is the first evidence that we have of his rising pecuniary fortunes, and of his determination to advance in social position.

Early in the year 1597,—on New Year's Day, Twelfth Night, Shrove Sunday, and Shrove Tuesday,—Shakespeare's company again performed before the Queen at Whitehall. In the summer they made a tour through Sussex and Kent, visiting Faversham and Rye in

August, and acting at Dover on the third of September. In their progress to the latter town, he who was hereafter to be the author of Lear might have witnessed, and been impressed with, the samphire gatherers on the celebrated rock that was afterwards to be regarded the type of Edgar's imaginary precipice. By the end of the month they had quitted the southern counties, and travelled westward as far as Bristol; acting about the same time at Marlborough and Bath.

In the spring of this year the great dramatist made his first investment in realty by the purchase of New Place, consisting of a mansion and nearly an acre of land in the centre of the town of Stratford-on-Avon. The estate was sold to him for £60, a moderate sum for so considerable a property, but in a paper of the time of 333
Edward the Sixth the residence is described as having then been for some time "in great ruyne and decay and unrepayred," so that it was probably in a dilapidated condition when it was transferred to Shakespeare. There are reasons for believing that it was renovated 334
by the new owner; but whatever may have been its state of repair at the time of its acquisition, it was unquestionably one of the largest domiciles in the town, there having been no other, with the single exception of the College, that was conspicuously more important. Sir Hugh Clopton, for whom it was erected, speaks of it in 1496 as his "great house," a title under which, as will be observed anon, it was popularly known at Stratford for upwards of two centuries. Neither its history nor its magnitude sufficed, however, to attract the serious consideration of our early topographers, and thus it is that scarcely any details of a precise character have been discovered respecting the nature of the house,

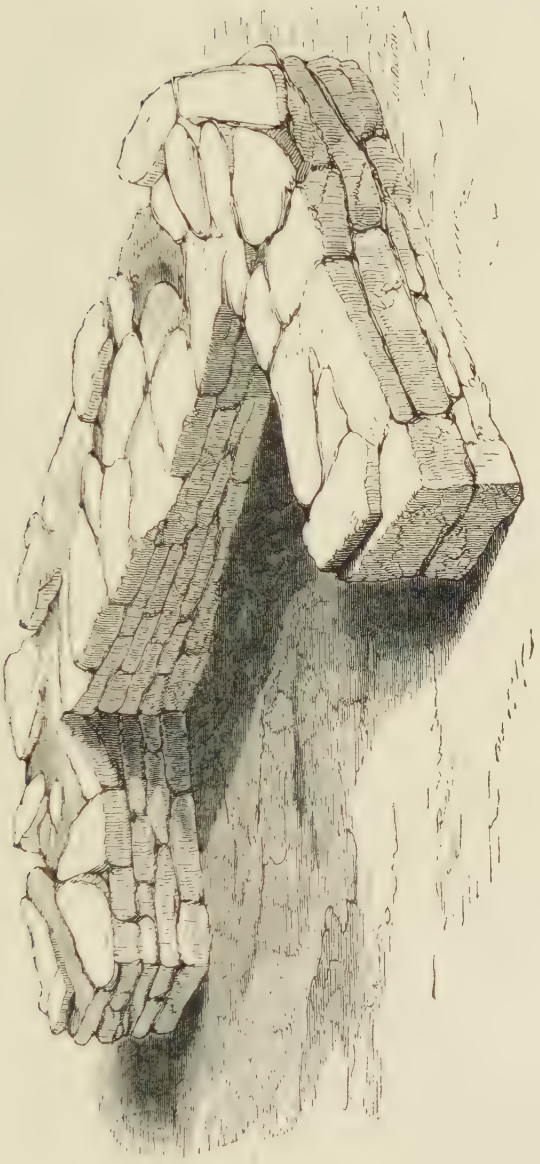
one which, if now in existence, would have been the most interesting edifice on the surface of the globe. We know, indeed, that it was mainly constructed of brick raised on stone foundations, that it was gabled, and that there was a bay-window on the eastern or garden side, but little beyond this. Two eye-witnesses only, out of the numbers who had seen the building previously to its destruction, have left memorials, and those but faint notices, of its appearance. Leland, who wrote about the year 1540, simply describes it as "a praty house of bricke and tymbre," words which may imply either that the upper part was formed entirely of wood or that there were large portions of bricknogging in the outer walls. Our other informant was a native of Stratford-on-Avon, one Richard Grimmitt, who was very familiar with New
335 Place in the years immediately preceding its demolition, and whose old-age dim memory of the locality in 1767 is
336 thus recorded by the Rev. Joseph Greene, an intelligent Warwickshire antiquary of the last century,—"this Richard said he in his youth had been a playfellow with Edward Clopton, senior, eldest son of Sir John Clopton, knight, and had been often with him in the Great House near the Chapel in Stratford call'd New Place; that, to the best of his remembrance, there was a brick wall next the street, with a kind of porch at that end of it next the Chapel, when they cross'd a small kind of green court before they enter'd the house, which was bearing to the left and fronted with brick, with plain windows, consisting of common panes of glass set in lead, as at this time." It appears from this statement that the main entrance was then in Chapel-lane, and this was no doubt the case at a much earlier period, arrangements of that kind being very rarely changed. We

may rest assured, therefore, that, when Ben Jonson or Drayton visited the provincial home of the author of Twelfth Night, he would arrive there from the lane through a porched gateway, entering in front of the lawn, a barn on his right hand and the house on the left. All this is in consonance with what is known respecting the surroundings of a large number of other contemporary mansions. "The architecture of an old English gentleman's house," observes Aubrey, alluding to the Shakespearean era, "was a good high strong wall, a gate-house, a great hall and parlour, and within

the little green court where you come in stood on one side the barne;—they then thought not the noise of the threshold ill musique." In the poet's time there were two barns on the Chapel-lane side of New Place between 337
the open area mentioned by Grimmitt and the eastern 338
termination of the grounds, but this is all that we know 339
respecting the outbuildings, unless, indeed, there can be
included under the latter term an ancient well, the stone- 340
work of which yet remains in a nearly perfect condition. The chief fact of interest, however, in the personal annals of this year, 1597, is the remarkable circumstance that

Shakespeare, after leaving his native town in indigence only twelve years previously, should now have been enabled to become, so far as material advantages were concerned, one of its leading inhabitants.

However limited may have been the character of the poet's visits to his native town, there is no doubt that New Place was henceforward to be accepted as his established residence. Early in the following year, on February the 4th, 1598, corn being then at an unprecedented and almost famine price at Stratford-on-Avon, he is returned as the holder of ten quarters in the Chapel Street Ward, that in which the newly acquired property was situated, and in none of the indentures is he described as a Londoner, but always as "William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon, in the county of Warwick, gentleman." There is an evidence in the same direction in the interest that he took in the maintenance of his grounds, a fact elicited from two circumstances that are worthy of record. It appears from a comparison of descriptions of parcels, 1597 and 1602, that in the earlier years of his occupancy,
367 he arranged a fruit-orchard in that portion of his garden which adjoined the neighbouring premises in Chapel Street. Then there is the well-authenticated tradition that, in another locality near the back of the house, he planted with his own hands the first mulberry-tree that had ever been brought to Stratford-on-Avon. The date of the latter occurrence has not been recorded, but it may be assigned, with a high degree of probability, to the spring of 1609, in which year a Frenchman named Verton distributed an immense number of young mulberry plants through the midland counties of England. This novel arrangement was carried out by the order of James the First, who vigorously encouraged the cultivation of that

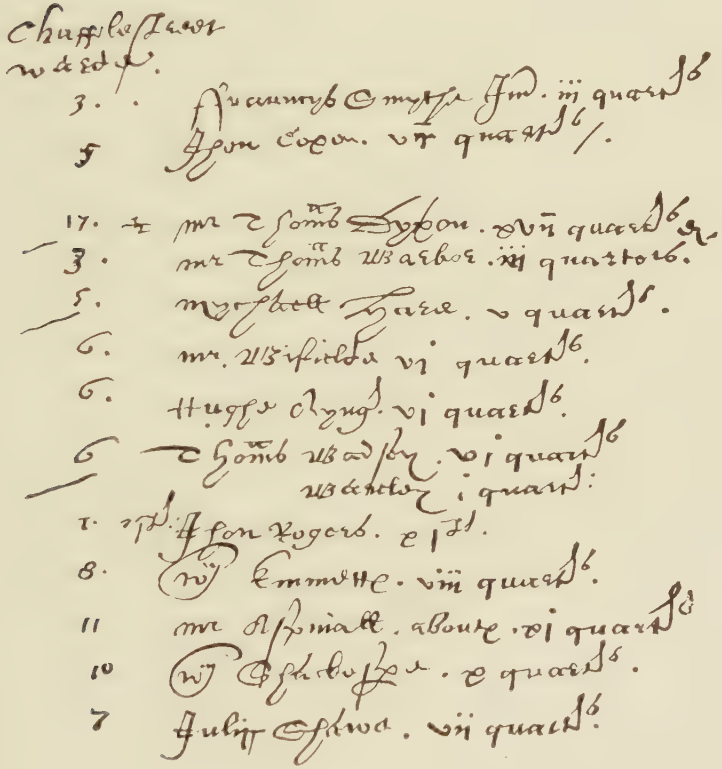


FOUNDATIONS OF AN ANCIENT BAY-WINDOW AT THE BACK OF SHAKESPEARE'S RESIDENCE AT NEW PLACE.

tree, vainly hoping that silk might thence become one of the staple productions of this country.

The establishment of the fruit-orchard and the tradition respecting the mulberry-tree are the only evidences which have reached us of any sort of interest taken by the great dramatist in horticulture. It has, indeed, been attempted to prove his attachment to such pursuits by various allusions in his works, but no inferences as to his personal tastes can be safely drawn from any number of cognate references. There was, no doubt, treasured in the store-house of his perfect memory, and ready for immediate use, every technical expression, and every morsel of contemporary popular belief, that had once come within his hearing. So marvellous also was Shakespeare's all but intuitive perception of nearly every variety of human thought and knowledge, the result of an unrivalled power of rapid observation and deduction, if once the hazardous course of attempting to realize the personal characteristics or habits of the author through his writings be indulged in, there is scarcely an occupation that he might not be suspected of having adopted at one period or other of his life. That he was familiar with and fondly appreciated the beauty of our wild flowers; that he was acquainted with many of the cultivated plants and trees; that he had witnessed and understood a few of the processes of gardening;—these facts may be admitted, but they do not prove that he was ever a botanist or a gardener. Neither are his numerous allusions to wild flowers and plants, not one of which appears to be peculiar to Warwickshire, evidences, as has been suggested, of the frequency of his visits to Stratford-on-Avon. It would be about as reasonable to surmise that he must have taken a journey to Elsinore before or when he was

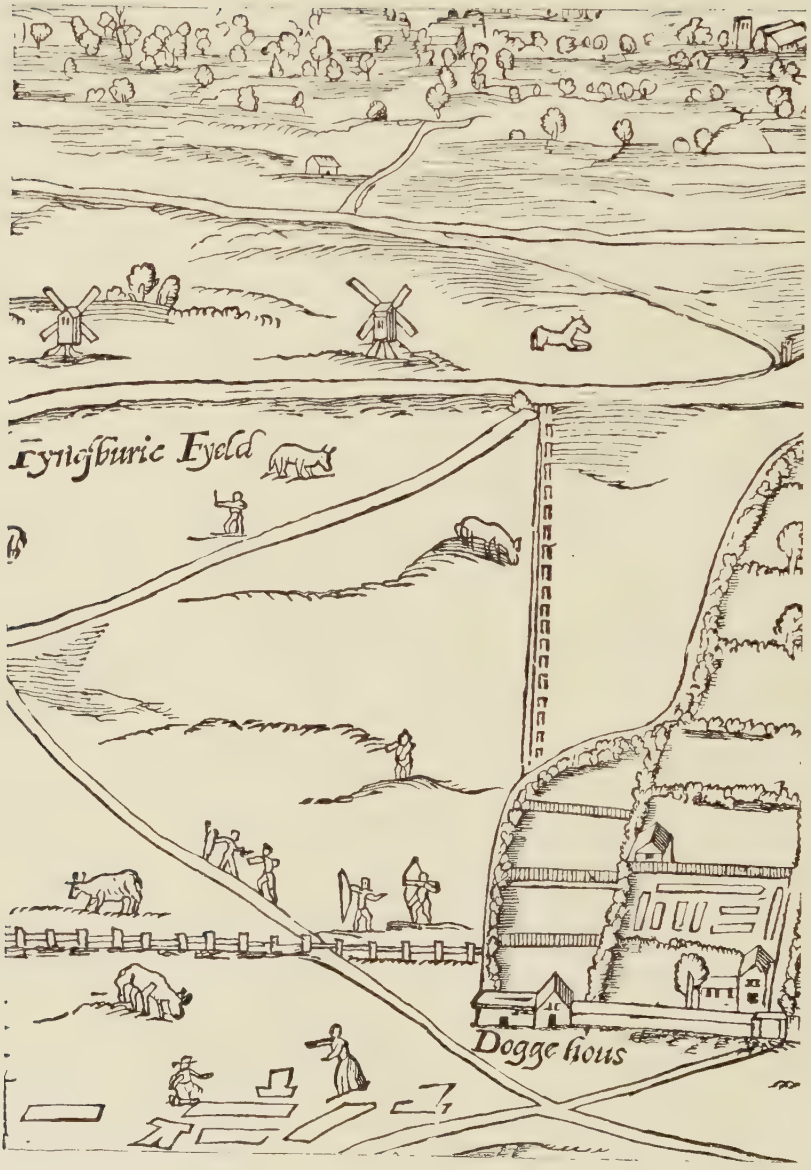
A facsimile of the list of holders of corn in the Ward of Stratford-on-Avon in which New Place was situated, from the original manuscript return dated in February, 1598. Shakespeare's name is introduced as the owner of ten quarters of corn, that entry being the earliest notice of him in the capacity of a householder.



engaged on the tragedy of Hamlet, as to adopt the oft-repeated suggestion that the nosegays of Perdita could only have been conceived when he was wandering on the banks of the Avon. To judge in that manner from allusions in the plays it might be inferred that the Winter's Tale must have been written in London, for there is little probability that a specimen of one of the flowers therein mentioned, the crown-imperial, could have been then seen in the provinces, whereas there is Gerard's excellent authority that it had "been brought from Constantinople amongst other bulbus rootes, and made denizons in our London gardens," Herball, ed. 1597, p. 154. All inductions of this kind must be received with the utmost caution. Surely the poet's memory was not so feeble that it is necessary to assume that the selection of his imagery depended upon the objects to be met with in the locality in which he was writing. Even were this extravagant supposition to be maintained, no conclusion can be derived from it, for it is not probable that London would have had the exclusive possession of any cultivated flower, while it is certain that Stratford had not the monopoly of every wild one. It should be recollected that the line of demarcation between country and town life was not strongly marked in Shakespeare's day. The great dramatist may be practically considered never to have relinquished a country life during any part of his career, for even when in the metropolis he must always have been within a walk of green fields, woods and plant-bordered streams, and within a few steps of some of the gardens which were then to be found in all parts of London, not even excepting the limited area of the City. Wild plants, as has been previously observed, were to be seen in the im-

mediate vicinity of the Shoreditch theatres, and there is perhaps no specimen mentioned by Shakespeare which was not to be met with in or near the metropolis; but even were this not the case, surely the fact of his having resided in Warwickshire during at least the first eighteen years of his life is sufficient to account for his knowledge of them. Then again at a later period he must, in those days of slow and leisurely travel, have been well acquainted with the rural life and natural objects of many other parts of the country which were traversed by him when the members of his company made their professional tours, and with the district between London and Stratford-on-Avon he must of course have been specially familiar.

The metropolis in those days was the main abode of English letters and refined culture, but in other respects there could have been very few experiences that were absolutely restricted to its limits. If this is carefully borne in mind, it will save us from falling into numerous delusions, and, amongst others, into the common one of fancying that Shakespeare must have drawn his tavern-life from an acquaintance with its character as it was exhibited on the banks of the Thames. There was no more necessity for him to have travelled from London in search of flowers than there was to have gone there for the,—"anon, anon, sir; score a pint of bastard in the Half Moon." We have, indeed, the direct testimony of Harrison, in 1586, to the effect that the metropolitan were then inferior to many of the provincial hotels. There was certainly at least one inn at Stratford-on-Avon which could bear comparison in essential respects with any to be found elsewhere in England. The Bear near the foot of the bridge possessed its large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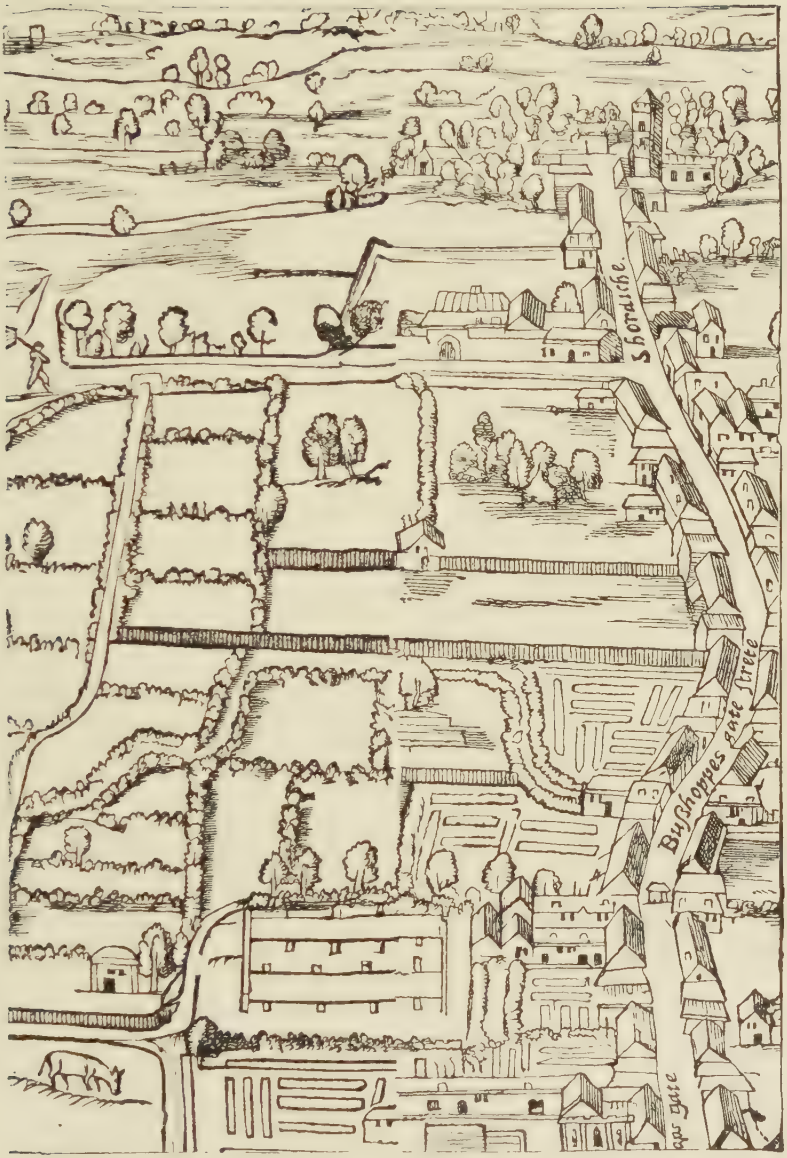
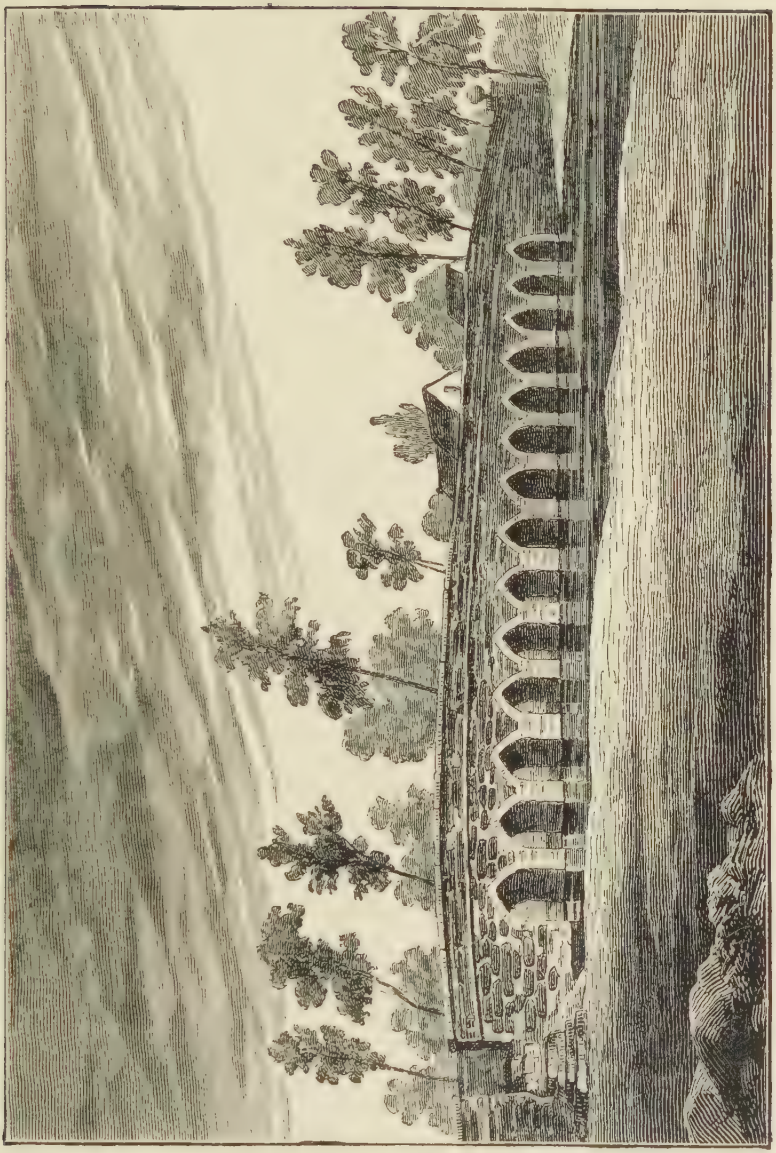

Shoreditch
Bishoppes gate street

hall, its nominated rooms such as the Lion and Talbot chambers, an enormous quantity of house linen, a whole pipe of claret, two butts of sack, plenty of beer, upwards of forty tankards of different sizes, and, amongst its plate, "one goblet of silver, parcel-gilt." The last-named vessel need not be converted into the prototype of the one used by Mrs. Quickly in the Dolphin, nor, as a rule, in the absence of palpable evidence to the contrary, are there grounds for believing that the great dramatist was thinking of special localities when he was penning his various allusions or characterizations.

210 When the amazing number of different characters in the plays of Shakespeare is borne in mind, it is curious that he should have left so few traces in them of what is exclusively provincial. There are yet fewer, if any, of language or customs that can be thought to be absolutely peculiar to Stratford-upon-Avon, but examples of both are frequently to be met with that may fairly be supposed to have been primarily derived from the poet's local experiences. Amongst these is the expression,—*avoint thee, witch!*—one that is so rare in our literature, either in print or manuscript, that the combined labours of philologists have failed to produce a single early instance of its use in the works of other authors. That it was, however, a familiar phrase in Shakespeare's time with the lower classes of his native place, is apparent from one of the town records. It is there narrated how one Goodie Bromlie, in an altercation with a woman named Holder, was so exceedingly free-spoken that she had the audacity to wind up a torrent of abuse with the unseemly execration,—*arent the, wich!* There is no doubt that Stratford yielded many another unusual expression,—

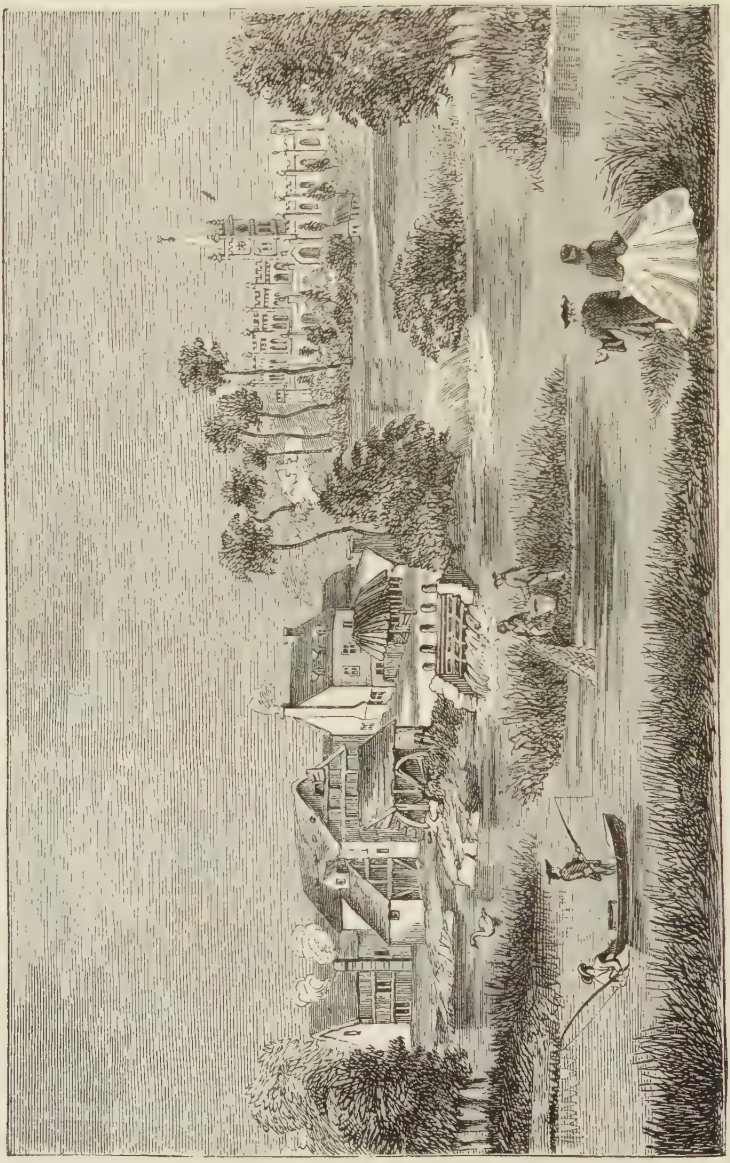


many a quaint observation,—to the recollection of the great dramatist, and it is just possible that an occasional specimen may yet be met with in the locality. One of the inhabitants, so recently as the year 1843, was put into the stocks for intoxication, and a passer-by, asking the captive how he liked the discipline, was met with the reply,—"I beant the first mon as ever were in the stocks, so I don't care a farden about it." If it were not an impossible view of the case, it might be fancied that the jovial delinquent had been travestying one of the reflections that Richard the Second is made to utter in the dungeon of Pomfret Castle.

Those who would desire to realize the general appearance of the Stratford-on-Avon of the poet's days must
59 deplore the absence, not merely of a genuine sketch of New Place, but of any kind of view or engraving of the town as it appeared in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. Its aspect must then have been essentially different from that exhibited at a subsequent period. Relatively to ourselves, Shakespeare may practically be considered to have existed in a different land, not more than glimpses of the real nature of which are now to be obtained by the most careful study of existing documents and material remains. Many enthusiasts of these times who visit Stratford-on-Avon are under the delusion that they behold a locality which recalls the days of the great dramatist, but, with the exception of a few diffused buildings, scarcely one of which is precisely in its original condition, there is no resemblance between the present town and the Shakespearean borough,—the latter with its medieval and Elizabethan buildings, its crosses, its numerous barns and thatched hovels, its water-mills its street bridges and rivulets, its mud

walls, its dunghills and fetid ditches, its unpaved walks and its wooden-spired church, with the common fields reaching nearly to the gardens of the Birth-Place. Neither can there be a much greater resemblance between the ancient and modern general views of the town from any of the neighbouring elevations. The tower and lower part of the church, the top of the Guild Chapel, a few old tall chimneys, the course of the river, the mill-dam, and the outlines of the surrounding hills, would be nearly all that would be common to both prospects. There were, however, until the last few years, the old mill-bridge, which, excepting that rails had been added, preserved its Elizabethan form, the Cross-on-the-Hill, and the Wier Brake, the two latter fully retaining their original character. Now, alas, a hideous railway has obliterated all trace of the picturesque from what was one of the most interesting and charming spots in Warwickshire. The annexed engraving is a copy of a sketch, taken about the year 1715, the earliest view of the locality that has yet been discovered.

A former inhabitant of Stratford-on-Avon, writing in the year 1759, asserts that "the unanimous tradition of this neighbourhood is that, by the uncommon bounty of the Earl of Southampton, he was enabled to purchase houses and land at Stratford." According to Rowe,—"there is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this patron of Shakespeare's that, if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William D'Avenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventured to have inserted; that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to." A



comparison of these versions would indicate that, if the anecdote is based on truth, the gift was made on the occasion of the purchase of New Place in 1597; and it is probable that it was larger than the sum required for that object, although the amount named by Rowe must be an exaggeration. Unless the general truth of the story be accepted, it is difficult to believe that Shakespeare could have obtained, so early in his career, the ample means he certainly possessed in that and the following year. The largest emoluments that could have been derived from his professional avocations would hardly have sufficed to have accomplished such a result, and the necessity of forwarding continual remittances to Stratford-on-Avon must not be overlooked.

It was not until the year 1597 that Shakespeare's public reputation as a dramatist was sufficiently established for the booksellers to be anxious to secure the copyright of his plays. The first of his dramas so honoured was the successful and popular one of Richard 282
the Second, which was entered as a tragedy on the books of the Stationers' Company by Andrew Wise, a publisher in St. Paul's Churchyard, on August the 29th, 1597. In the impression heralded by this entry the deposition scene was omitted for political reasons, objections having 283
been made to its introduction on the public stage, and it 285
was not inserted by the publishers of the history until 284
some years after the accession of James. Considering the small space that it occupies and its inoffensive character, the omission may appear rather singular, but during the few years that closed the eventful reign of Elizabeth, the subject of the deposition of Richard the Second bore so close an analogy, in the important respects of the wishes of those who desired a repetition

285 of a similar occurrence, it was an exceedingly dangerous theme for the pen of contemporary writers.

One of the most popular subjects for the historical
49 drama at this period was the story of Richard the Third. A piece on the events of this reign had been acted by the Queen's Company in or before the month of June, 1594, but there is no evidence that this production was known to the great dramatist. The earliest notice of Shakespeare's play hitherto discovered is in an entry of it as a tragedy on the books of the Stationers' Company in October, 1597, and it was published by Wise in the same year. The historical portions are to a certain extent taken from More and Holinshed, but with an utter defiance of chronology, the imprisonment of Clarence, for instance, preceding the funeral of Henry the Sixth. There are, also, slight traces of an older play to be observed, passages which may belong to an inferior hand, and incidents, such as that of the rising of the ghosts, suggested probably by similar ones in a more ancient composition. That the play of Richard the Third, as we now have it, is essentially Shakespeare's, cannot admit of a doubt; but as little can it be questioned that to the circumstance of an anterior work on the subject having been used do we owe some of its weakness and excessively turbulent character. No copy of this older play is known to exist, but one brief speech and the two following lines have been accidentally preserved—"My liege, the Duke of Buckingham is ta'en,=And Banister is come for his reward"—from which it is clear that the new dramatist did not hesitate to adopt an occasional line from his predecessor, although he entirely omitted the character of Banister. Both plays must have been successful, for, notwithstanding the great popularity of

Shakespeare's, the more ancient one sustained its ground on the English stage until the reign of Charles the First.

Dick Burbage, the celebrated actor, undertook the 50
character of Richard the Third, a part in which he was particularly celebrated. There was especially one telling speech in this most fiery of tragedies,—"a horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!"—which was enunciated by him with so much vigour and effect that the line became an object for the imitation, and occasionally for the ridicule, of contemporary writers. The speech made such an impression on Marston that it appears in his works not merely in its authentic form, but satirized and travestied 51
into such lines as,—"a man! a man! a kingdom for a man," Scourge of Villanie, ed. 1598, — "a boate, a boate, a boate, a full hundred markes for a boate," Eastward Hoe, 1605,—"a foole, a foole, a foole, my coxcombe for a foole," Parasitaster, 1606. Burbage continued to enact the part of Richard until his death in 1619, and his supremacy in the character lingered for many years in the recollection of the public; so that Bishop Corbet, writing in the reign of Charles the First, and giving a description of the battle of Bosworth as narrated to him on the field by a provincial tavern-keeper, tells us that, when the perspicuous guide—"would have said, King Richard died,=And called, a horse! a horse!, he Burbage cried."

In the autumn of 1597, in the midst of the incipient popularity of this animated drama, John and Mary Shakespeare filed a bill in Chancery against Lambert for the recovery of Asbies, a design that the poet must have been desirous of furthering to the utmost of his ability. It is most likely that he furnished the means for the prosecution of the suit, a course to which he

would have been impelled not merely from a knowledge of the slender resources of his aged parents, but also from his having, as his mother's heir, so large a prospective interest in the success of the litigation. The acquisition of the farm had now become a matter of special importance. There were not merely the associations twining around the possession of a family estate to stimulate a desire for its restoration, but there was nearly at hand a very large increase in its annual value through the ter-
324 mination of a lease under which all but the dwelling was held from 1580 to 1601 at the inadequate rental of half a quarter of wheat and half a quarter of barley. Our knowledge of the course taken by the plaintiffs in furtherance of their object is imperfect, Lambert, in his answer to the above-mentioned bill, declaring that another one of
325 like import had been afterwards exhibited against him by John Shakespeare in his individual capacity, and of this independent action no explanatory records have been discovered. The mere facts, however, of the last-named suit having been instituted, and of John Shakespeare having taken out two commissions under it for the examination of witnesses, show that there was a tolerably well-furnished purse at his disposal, a circumstance which, unless the expenses were borne by the poet, is difficult to reconcile with the plaintive appeal of his wife and himself when they asked the Court to bear in mind that "the sayde John Lamberte ys of greate wealthe and abilitie, and well frended and alied amongest gentlemen and freeholders of the countrey in the saide countie of Warwicke, where he dwelleth, and your saide oratours are of small wealthe, and verey fewe frends and alyance in the saide countie." The terms of this sample of legal policy must
368 be attributed to the Counsel, but the facts, so far at least

as they affect the parents of the great dramatist, were no doubt correctly stated. It appears that the suit was carried on for very nearly two years, publication having been granted in October, 1599, but, as no decree is recorded, it is all but certain that either the plaintiffs retired from the contest, or that there was a compromise in favour of the possession of the land by the defendants. Had it been otherwise, something must have been afterwards heard of the Shakespearean ownership of the estate.

Queen Elizabeth held her court at Whitehall in the Christmas holidays of 1597, and amongst the plays then performed was, on December the 26th, the comedy of Love's Labour's Lost, printed early in the following 72
year, 1598, under the title of,—"A Pleasant Conceited Comedie called, Loues labors lost." No record has been discovered of the time at which this drama was first produced, but on the present occasion it had been "newly corrected and augmented," that is to say, it had received some additions and improvements from the hands of the author, but the play itself had not been re-written. A few scraps of the original version of the 73
comedy have been accidentally preserved, and are of extreme interest as distinctly exhibiting Shakespeare's method of working in the revision of a play. Thus, for example, the following three lines of the earlier drama,—

> From women's eyes this doctrine I derive;
> They are the ground, the books, the academes
> From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire.

are thus gracefully expanded in the corrected version which has so fortunately descended to us,—

The following is a copy of the earliest title-page in which Shakespeare's name is given as the author of the work.

A
PLEASANT
Conceited Comedie
CALLED,
Loues labors loſt.

As it vvas preſented before her Highnes
this laſt Chriſtmas.

Newly corrected and augmented
By W. Shakeſpere.

Imprinted at London by *W.W.*
for *Cutbert Burby.*
1598.

The name of the great dramatist also occurs on the titles of two other of his plays that were issued later in the same year.

From women's eyes this doctrine I derive;
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;
They are the books, the arts, the academes,
That show, contain, and nourish all the world;
Else none at all in ought proves excellent.

Love's Labour's Lost is mentioned by Tofte and Meres 74
in 1598, and was no doubt successful on the stage, or otherwise it would scarcely have been revised and published. Burbage, at all events, had a high opinion of the comedy, for when the company to which the author belonged selected it for a contemplated representation before Queen Anne of Denmark at Southampton House early in the year 1605, he observed that it was one "which for wit and mirth will please her exceedingly." That the great actor correctly estimated its attractions may be gathered from its being performed about the same time before the Court.

The First Part of Henry the Fourth, the appearance
of which on the stage may be confidently assigned to the 260
spring of the year 1597, was followed immediately, or a 261
few months afterwards, by the composition of the Second 262
Part. It is recorded that both these plays were very 263
favourably received by Elizabeth, the Queen especially relishing the character of Falstaff, and they were most probably amongst the dramas represented before that sovereign in the Christmas holidays of 1597-8. At this time, or then very recently, the renowned hero of the Boar's Head Tavern had been introduced as Sir John 13
Oldcastle, but the Queen ordered Shakespeare to alter 264
the name of the character. This step was taken in 265
consequence of the representations of some member or members of the Cobham family, who had taken offence at their illustrious ancestor, Sir John Oldcastle, Lord 266
Cobham, the Protestant martyr, being disparagingly

introduced on the stage; and, accordingly, in or before the February of the following year, Falstaff took the place of Oldcastle, the former being probably one of the
267 few names invented by Shakespeare.

The great dramatist himself, having nominally adopted Oldcastle from a character who is one of Prince Henry's profligate companions in a previous drama, a composition which had been several years before the public, and had not encountered effective remonstrance, could have had no idea that his appropriation of the name would have given so much displeasure. The subject, however, was viewed by the Cobhams in a very serious light. This is clearly shown, not merely by the action taken by the Queen, but by the anxiety exhibited by Shakespeare, in the Epilogue to the Second Part, to place the matter beyond all doubt by the explicit declaration that there was in Falstaff no kind of association, satirical or otherwise, with the martyred Oldcastle. The whole incident is a testimony to the popularity of, and the importance attached to, these dramas of Shakespeare's at their first appearance, and it may be fairly questioned if any comedy on the early English stage was more immediately or enthusiastically appreciated than was the First
268 Part of Henry the Fourth. Two editions of the latter play appeared in 1598, and, in the same year, there were quoted from it passages that had evidently already
269 become familiar household words in the mouths of the public. Strangely enough, however, the earliest edition that bore the author's name on the title-page was not published till the following year.

270 The inimitable humour of Falstaff was appreciated at the Court as heartily as by the public. The Queen was so taken with the delineation of that marvellous

character in the two parts of Henry the Fourth, that she commanded Shakespeare to write a third part in which the fat knight should be exhibited as a victim to the power of love. Sovereigns in the olden time, especially one of Elizabeth's temperament, would never have dreamt of consulting the author as to the risk of the selected additional passion not harmonizing with the original conception. Shakespeare's business was to obey, not to indulge in what would have been considered an insolent and unintelligible remonstrance. His intention of continuing the history of the same Falstaff in a play on the subject of Henry the Fifth was, therefore, abandoned, 195
and thus we have, in the Merry Wives of Windsor, a comedy in which some of the names are adopted from the previous dramas, but the natures of the characters to which those names are attached are either modified or altogether transformed. The transient allusions which bring the latter play into the historical series are so trivial, that they would appear to have been introduced merely out of deference to the Queen's expressed wishes for 29
a continuation. The comedy diverges in every other respect from the two Parts of Henry the Fourth, and remains, with the Induction to the Taming of the Shrew, the only examples in the works of Shakespeare of absolute and continuous representations of English life and manners of the author's own time.

There is an old tradition which avers that the Merry Wives of Windsor was written, at the desire of the Queen, 30
in the brief space of a fortnight, and that it gave immense 31
satisfaction at the Court. Nor in those days of rapid dramatic composition, when brevity of time in the exe- 32
cution of such work was frequently part of an ordinary theatrical agreement, could such a feat have been

impossible to Shakespeare. It could have been no trouble to him to write, and the exceptional celerity of his pen is recorded by several of his friends. Hence, probably, are to be traced most of the numerous little discrepancies which, by a careful analysis, may be detected throughout the works of the great dramatist, and which are seen perhaps more conspicuously in this play than in most of the others. Shakespeare had evidently, as a writer, neither a topographical nor a chronometrical mind, and took small care to avoid inconsistencies arising from errors in his dispositions of localities and periods of time; provided always of course that such oversights were not sufficiently palpable in the action to disturb the complete reception of the latter by the audience. We may rest assured that the poet, when engaged in dramatic writing, neither placed before his eyes an elaborate map of the scenes of the plot; nor reckoned the exact number of hours to be taken by a character in moving from one spot to another; nor, in the composition of each line of verse, repeated the syllables to ascertain if they developed the style of metre it was his duty to posterity to be using at that special period of his life. Such precautions may best be indefinitely reserved for the use of that visionary personage,—a scientific and arithmetical Shakespeare.

The earliest notice of the Merry Wives of Windsor, hitherto discovered, is in an entry on the registers of the Stationers' Company bearing date in January, 1602,
33 in which year a catch-penny publisher surreptitiously
34 issued a very defective copy, one made up by some poetaster, with the aid of short-hand notes, into the form of a play. That it was composed, however, before the death of Sir Thomas Lucy in July, 1600, may be safely taken for granted, for it is contrary to all records of

Shakespeare's nature to believe that the more than playful allusions it contains to that individual would have been written after the decease of Shallow's prototype; and most probably also before the production of Henry 35
the Fifth in the summer of 1599, the royal command being the most feasible explanation that can be given of the author's change of purpose in the elimination of Falstaff from the action of the latter drama.

The Second Part of Henry the Fourth and the Merry Wives of Windsor are, so far as we know, the only dramas of Shakespeare that are in any way connected with his personal history. They include scenes that could not have been written exactly in their present form if the great dramatist had not entertained an acute grudge against Sir Thomas Lucy. The knight of Charlecote was to be lampooned on the stage, then by far the most effective medium for public irrision, and hence arose the necessity of making Falstaff take his circuitous journeys to the "old pike's" house in Gloucestershire, to a locality within reach of Stratford-on-Avon and Henley-in-Arden, towns that are faintly veiled under the names of Stamford and Hinckley. Hence also the direct and practically undisguised banter of the Lucys in the Merry Wives, for no one in Warwickshire could possibly have mistaken the allusion to the luces, the fishes otherwise 357
termed pikes, that held so conspicuous a position in the family shield; and hence the rapidity with which the quarrel with Falstaff is dismissed after the object of its introduction had been satisfied. And although it may be consistent with dramatic possibilities that Shallow, when he arrives at Windsor on a mission of complaint to the King, should be welcomed there by an intimate friend, an inhabitant of that town, and at the same time a

fellow-sportsman on the Cotswold,—one may be pardoned for suspecting that the Gloucestershire magistrate would not have been transferred to the royal borough if his presence had not been required for the effective illustration of the Charlecote escapade. Be this as it may, there is sufficient outside the region of conjecture to enable us to infer that the poet designed, in his satirical notices of the justice, an individual as well as a general application, and where could the listeners be found that would be likely to appreciate the former? Certainly neither in London nor at the Court, even on the very unlikely supposition that intelligence of the deer-stealing affair had reached so far, for Sir Thomas's public life, at the earliest date at which either of the comedies could have been produced, had for many years been restricted to the midland counties. It may, therefore, be assumed that the great dramatist had in view representations of his pieces that he knew would be organized at or near Stratford after the termination of their first runs in the metropolis. But although a long-sustained resentment, under conditions of special insult or oppression, is not incompatible with the possession of an essentially gentle nature, it is not at all necessary to fancy that Shakespeare was here acting in the mere irrational spirit of retaliation. The owner of New Place had a social position to consolidate in his native town, and he took the best means of neutralising a vexatious

piece of scandal by holding up to local ridicule the individual whose line of treatment had attached to him whatever there was in the matter of personal degradation. And he would have been encouraged by the sympathy of the many who detested Sir Thomas's fanatical policy, even if the quarrel with him had not been in itself a passport to their favour. The news of the performance would somehow or other reach the ears of that potentate, who would naturally have been highly incensed at the unpardonable liberty that had been taken; the more so if, as it would appear, he was peculiarly sensitive to the opinion of his neighbours. The flight to 358
London is an incontestable evidence that Shakespeare had no dread at that time of a metropolitan prosecution, and it was probably now, if ever, that Sir Thomas threatened to make his conduct, even at that late day, the subject of an appeal to the Star Chamber. Then would have followed the more pointed attack in the opening scene at Windsor, that in which his judicial dignities and his coat-armour, as well as the poaching adventure itself, are so mercilessly caricatured. It is not probable, however, that the entire significance of that dialogue will ever be ascertained. Much that is now obscure was no doubt immensely relished by the contemporary Stratfordians. It is easy to imagine, for example, the roars of laughter that might have greeted the poet's declaration, made through Falstaff, that he had never kissed the keeper's daughter, if so be that the lady in question had chanced to have been one of nature's scarecrows; and who will venture to be confident that there is no quaint hidden meanings in the references to the salt fish and the old coat? And again, as the assiduous knight never appears to have declined an

invitation to take a glass of wine, it is very likely that the bacchanalian tournament with Silence is no overdrawn picture, one, moreover, that would have been thoroughly enjoyed in a neighbourhood in which the jovial host had
359 taken an active part in a commission for the reformation of tipplers.

Exaggeration is one of the legitimate resources of satirical art, and that it has largely affected the dramatic portraiture of Sir Thomas Lucy cannot admit of a reasonable doubt. A tolerable degree of business and even of administrative capacity is, indeed, sometimes to be observed in men of no great wisdom, but there are substantial reasons for believing that Sir Thomas could not have been the precise intellectual counterpart of Justice Shallow. This may be gathered from a perusal of his correspondence, from the notices of his parliamentary doings, and, so far as marble can be a faithful guide in such matters, from the expression of his features in the Charlecote effigy, the only authentic likeness of him known to exist. Neither would it be inferred from that memorial that he could have been correctly represented as a starveling, but here allowance must be made for Falstaff's imagery having been in a great measure dependent upon his relative estimate of the standard of personal expanse. That there was much, however, of existing personation in the dramatic character and surroundings of the Gloucestershire justice that would have been readily interpreted by a Stratford audience is unquestionable. Although our supplies of information on this point are very defective, there are still contemporary
360 records which tell us of the special interest taken by Sir
361 Thomas in the details of archery, of the hospitality that
362 was the order of his mansion, of his familiarity with

recruits and the muster-roll, of the antiquity of his family, and, above all, of that appreciation of "friends at court" through whose influence he contrived to bask in the divergent sunshines of Mary and Elizabeth. Nor is 353
there the least reason for suspecting that his violent Protestantism, so convenient in the latter reign, was in any way connected with an asceticism that would have decried the stage or excluded a festive evening with a brother magistrate. We know, on the contrary, that he was the 364
patron of a company of itinerant actors, and that he had an intelligent estimate of the virtues of sack. Much, indeed, has been said of his dislike to the Shakespeares on religious grounds, but there is really nothing to warrant such an assumption beyond the bare and inadequate fact that he served on a commission under which the poet's father was named in a list of suspected recusants.

Two plays, the titles of which have not been recorded, were acted by Shakespeare's company in the early part of the year 1598, the poet being then in London. It is 233
certain, however, that his thoughts were not at this time absorbed by literature or the stage. So far from this being the case, there are good reasons for concluding that they were largely occupied with matters relating to pecuniary affairs, and to the progress of his influence at Stratford-on-Avon. He was then considering the advisability of purchasing an "odd yard land or other" in the neighbourhood, and this circumstance, indicating the possession of redundant means, becoming known, his friend, Richard Quiney, who was in the metropolis, was strongly urged both in English and Latin to suggest to him the policy of trying to obtain one of the valuable tithe-leases, and to name, amongst other inducements,— 222
"by the friends he can make therefore, we think it a

fair mark for him to shoot at;—it obtained would advance him in deed and would do us much good," letter of Abraham Sturley dated from Stratford-on-Avon, 24 January, 1598. These expressions indicate that Shakespeare's desire to establish a good position for himself in his native town was well known to his provincial friends.

When Shakespeare was meditating the purchase of the "odd yard," that is to say, most likely rather more than fourty acres of land or thereabouts, he appears to have had a predilection in favour of Shottery, a hamlet in the immediate neighbourhood of Stratford. It was in this village that he is generally believed, but on somewhat inconclusive grounds, to have met with his future wife, and hence has arisen the inevitable surmise that the inclination in favour of the particular investment emanated from recollections of the days of courtship. Some of those days may, indeed, have been passed in that locality, but whether this be the case or no, it is obvious, from the terms in which the contemplated acquisition is introduced, that he was desirous of becoming one of the proprietors of its open fields. These latter, which were very extensive, comprising altogether about sixteen hundred acres, have long been enclosed, while there is nothing on their site, and little in their vicinity, to recall the Shottery that was now in the poet's thoughts. Most of its numerous ancient footpaths have been suppressed; its mud-walls have disappeared; very few of its dwellings exhibit outward traces of genuine Elizabethan work, and a hideous culvert is the modern substitute for what was
291 once a stepping-stone passage across a gurgling brook. It may be confidently stated that there is only one of its buildings that can be thought to have retained an

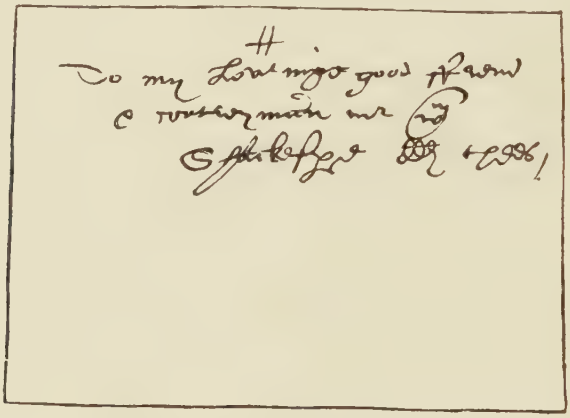
approach to a complete preservation of its original external features, a farm-house that belonged to a family of the name of Hathaway, and one that is usually considered to be the birth-place of Shakespeare's own Anne. But although it cannot be said that "the report of her is extended more than can be thought to begin from such a cottage," the truthful biographer is compelled to admit, in my case more than reluctantly, that the balance of evidence is hardly in favour of the attribution.

It was natural that the poet, having not only himself bitterly felt the want of resources not so many years previously, but seen so much inconvenience arising from a similar deficiency in his father's household, should now be determining to avoid the chance of a recurrence of the infliction. That he did not love money for its own sake, or for more than its relative advantages, may be gathered from his liberal expenditure in after life; but that he had the wisdom to make other tastes subservient to its acquisition, so long as that course was suggested by prudence, is a fact that cannot fairly be questioned. However repugnant it may be to the flowery sentiments of the æsthetic critics, no doubt can arise, in the minds of those who will listen to evidence, that when Pope asserted that—

> Shakespeare, whom you and ev'ry playhouse bill
> Style the divine, the matchless, what you will,
> For gain, not glory, wing'd his roving flight,
> And grew immortal in his own despight.

he not only expressed the traditional belief of his own day, but one which later researches have unerringly verified. With all Shakespeare's gentleness of disposition and amiable qualities, it is evident from the records

that there was very little of the merely sentimental in his nature; that is to say, of such matters as a desire for posthumous fame, or the excitable sympathy which is so often recklessly appeased without thought of results. In the year now under consideration, 1598, he appears not only as an advancer of money, but also, as will be presently seen, one who negotiated loans through other capitalists. "If you bargain with William Shakespeare," writes Adrian Quiney, from the country, to his son



Richard in London, "or receive money therefore, bring your money home that you may." The latter, who was one of the leading business inhabitants of Stratford-on-Avon, was in the metropolis endeavouring to arrange important matters for the town, including the grant of a new charter and relief from a subsidy. He was not well furnished with the necessary means for carrying on these affairs, the Corporation experiencing trouble and delay in obtaining funds, circumstances which rendered them anxious for the sale of the tithe-lease which they, as previously mentioned, desired to be offered to Shakespeare. The worthy agent was also greatly embarrassed

in the same year on his own account, and some months afterwards applied to the great dramatist for the loan of the then very considerable sum of thirty pounds. The application was made in a tiny little note folded into the dimensions represented by the line surrounding the above facsimile of the direction; but it may admit of a doubt that it was ever forwarded to the poet. The Quiney correspondence was introduced somehow or other into the Corporation archives, most probably on the death of Richard in his year of office, but, if Shakespeare had received the communication, it is all but impossible to account satisfactorily for its being found in that depository. It may be that the great dramatist called on Richard Quiney just before the departure of the latter for the Court, thus rendering the despatch of the billet unnecessary; and this view is confirmed by Sturley's remarks on the poet in his letter of November.

Not a single fragment of any of the poet's own letters has yet been discovered, and the above is the only one addressed to him which is known to exist. It will be observed that the money was proposed to be lent on Quiney's personal security united with that of either Mr. Bushell or Mr. Mytton, both Stratford men; but there are mysterious allusions towards the close of the letter which indicate that the loan was to be obtained through another person, the poet's security to the last being an essential consideration in the arrangement. If it were otherwise, why should Quiney be so anxious to mention that Shakespeare "will neither lose *credit nor money*" by the affair; or why should he wish to "content his friend;" or why should he promise him, if they arranged other matters, that "you shall be the paymaster yourself." It is certain that the great dramatist had at this

Facsimile of Richard Quiney's letter, 1598, the only one addressed to Shakespeare which is known to exist.

Loveinge contreyman, I am bolde of yow, as of a ffrende, craveinge yowr helpe with xxx.*ll.* vppon Mr. Bushells and my securytee, or Mr. Myttons with me. Mr. Rosswell is nott come to London as yeate, and I have especiall cawse. Yow shall ffrende me muche in helpeing me out of all the debettes I owe in London, I thancke God, and muche quiet my mynde, which wolde nott be indebeted. I am nowe towardes the Cowrte, in hope of answer for the dispatche of my buysenes. Yow shall nether loase creddytt nor monney by me, the Lorde wyllinge; and nowe butt perswade yowrselfe soe, as I hope, and yow shall nott need to feare, butt, with all hartie thanckefullenes, I wyll holde my tyme, and content yowr ffrende, and yf we bargaine farther, yow shal be the paie-master yowrselfe. My tyme biddes me hastene to an ende, and soe I committ thys [to] yowr care and hope of yowr helpe. I feare I shall nott be backe thys night ffrom the Cowrte. Haste. The Lorde be with yow and with vs all, Amen! ffrom the Bell in Carter Lane, the 25 October, 1598.

Yowrs in all kyndenes,

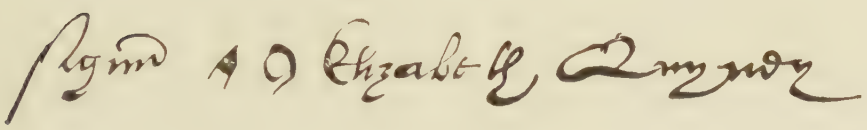
Ryc. Quyney.

To my loveinge good ffrend and contreymann Mr. Wm. Shackespere deliver thees.

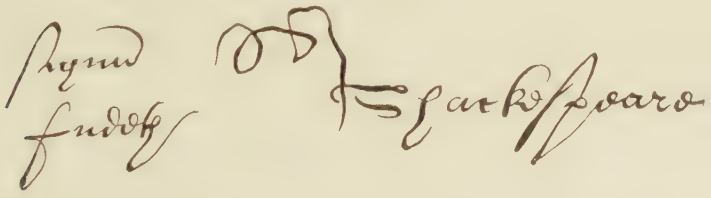
period not only money, but more opportunities for the transaction of monetary business than were accessible to his country friends; for, on the very day that Quiney applied to him for this personal loan, the former writes to his brother-in-law at Stratford-on-Avon to inform him that Shakespeare had undertaken to negotiate a pecuniary advance to the Corporation. "Your letter of the 25th of October," writes Sturley to Quiney on November the 4th, 1598, "came to my hands the last of the same at night per Greenway, which imported that our countryman, Mr. William Shakespeare, would procure us money, which I will like of as I shall hear when and where and how; and I pray let not go that occasion, if it may sort to any indifferent conditions." The Greenway here mentioned was the Stratford carrier, the good people of that town being well contented in those days if they received letters from the metropolis once in a week.

The Richard Quiney, to whom Shakespeare was a "loving countryman" and friend, was descended from his namesake, the Master of the Guild of Stratford-on-Avon in the time of Henry the Eighth. He was one of the leading tradesmen of the town, his father Adrian and himself being well-to-do mercers, persons of that occupation then dealing, at least in Warwickshire, not only in silk and cloth, but in such miscellaneous articles as ginger, sugar, and red-lead. Throughout the reign of Elizabeth the Quineys were influential members of the Corporation, and were thus brought into contact with the poet's father during the official career of the latter. In January, 1572, John Shakespeare was nominated, in conjunction with Adrian Quiney, then bailiff, to undertake the management of some important legal business connected with the affairs of the borough. It was this Adrian to whom the great

dramatist, in 1598, apparently communicated his intention of negotiating for the purchase of land at Shottery. Richard Quiney, who married in 1580 the daughter and sole heiress of one Thomas Philipps, another of the Stratford mercers, was bailiff in 1592-1593 and again in 1601-1602, dying in the year last mentioned after a few weeks' illness, and before his term of office had expired. After his decease, his widow, Elizabeth, kept a tavern,



and in her house no doubt were opportunities for her friend, Judith Shakespeare, seeing much of her future husband, with whom, indeed, she must have been acquainted from childhood. It may be worth mentioning that, in common at that time with most ladies of their position, neither Mrs. Quiney nor her future daughter-in-law could even write their own names. There were no free-schools for girls, and home education was, as a rule, the privilege of a section of the higher classes; so



when Judith Shakespeare was invited in December, 1611, to be a subscribing witness to two instruments respecting a house at the south-east corner of Wood Street, then being sold by Mrs. Quiney to one William Mountford for

the large sum of £131, in both instances her attestations were executed with marks.

66 The comedy of the Merchant of Venice, the plot of which was either grounded on that of an older drama, or formed out of tales long familiar to the public, was represented with success in London in or before the month of July, 1598. It then had another title, being "otherwise called the Jew of Venice," and a bookseller named Roberts was anxious to secure the copyright, but the registrars of Stationers' Hall withheld their consent until he had obtained the sanction of the Lord Chamberlain, in other words, that of the author and his colleagues; and upwards of two years elapsed before
67 the earliest editions of the comedy appeared. It continued for a long time to be one of the acting plays of Shakespeare's company, and, as lately as 1605, it attracted the favourable notice of James the First, who was so much pleased with one performance that he ordered a repetition of it two days afterwards.

One of the most interesting of the recorded events of Shakespeare's life occurred in the present year. In September, 1598, Ben Jonson's famous comedy of Every Man in his Humor was produced by the Lord Chamberlain's company, and there is every probability that both writer and manager were indebted for its acceptance to the sagacity of the great dramatist, who was one of the leading actors on the occasion. "His acquaintance with Ben Jonson," observes Rowe, "began with a remarkable piece of humanity and good nature; Mr. Jonson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered one of his plays to the players in order to have it acted, and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and super-

ciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natured answer that it would be of no service to their company, when Shakespeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the public." The statement that rare Ben was then absolutely new to literature is certainly erroneous, however ignorant the Burbages or their colleagues may have been of his primitive efforts; but he was in a state of indigence, rendering the judgment on his manuscript of vital consequence, and the services of a friendly advocate of inestimable value. He had been engaged in dramatic work for Henslowe some months before the appearance of the new comedy, but about that time there seems to have been a misunderstanding between them, the latter alluding to Jonson simply as a bricklayer, not as one of his company, in his record of the unfortunate duel with Gabriel. There had been, in all probability, a theatrical disturbance resulting in the last-named event, and in Ben's temporary secession from the Rose. Then there are the words of Jonson himself, who, unbiassed by the recollection that he had been defeated in, at all events, one literary skirmish with the great dramatist, speaks of him in language that would appear hyperbolical had it not been sanctioned by a feeling of gratitude for a definite and important service, —"I loved the man and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any." This was a personal idolatry, not one solely in reference to his works, moderately adverse criticisms upon which immediately follow the generous panegyric. It may, then, fairly be said that the evidences at our disposal favour, on the whole, the general credibility of the anecdote narrated by Rowe.

In the same month in which Shakespeare was acting in Ben Jonson's comedy,—September, 1598,—there appeared in London the Palladis Tamia, a work that contains more elaborate notices of the great dramatist than are elsewhere to be found in all contemporary literature. Its author was one Francis Meres, a native of Lincolnshire, who had been educated at Cambridge, but for some time past resident in the metropolis. Although his studies were mostly of a theological character, he was interested in all branches of literature, and had formed intimacies with some of its chief representatives. He had been favoured with access to the unpublished writings of Drayton and Shakespeare, and had either seen a manuscript, or witnessed a representation, of rare Ben's earliest tragedy. In the important enumeration of Shakespeare's plays given by Meres, four of them,—the Two Gentlemen of Verona, Love Labours
20 Won, the Midsummer Night's Dream, and King John,—
21 are mentioned for the first time. There can be no doubt that the first of these dramas had been written some
75 years previously, and Love Labours Won, a production which is nowhere else alluded to, is one of the numerous works of that time which have long since perished, unless
48 its graceful appellation be the original or a secondary
80 title of some other comedy. Neither King John nor the Two Gentlemen of Verona was printed during the author's lifetime, but two editions of the Midsummer Night's Dream appeared in the year 1600. This last-mentioned circumstance indicates the then popularity of that exquisite but singular drama, the comic scenes of which appear to have been those specially relished by the public. One
22 little fragment of the contemporary stage humour, displayed in the representation of this play, has been recorded.

When Thisbe killed herself, she fell on the scabbard, not on the trusty sword, the interlude doubtlessly having been acted in that spirit of extreme farce which was naturally evolved from the stupidity and nervousness of the clowns.

It is in the Palladis Tamia, 1598, that we first hear of those remarkable productions, the Sonnets. "As the soul of Euphorbus," observes Meres in that quaint collection of similitudes, "was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare; witness his Venus and Adonis, his Lucrece, his sugared Sonnets among his private friends, &c." These last-mentioned dainty poems were clearly not then intended for general circulation, and even transcripts of a few were obtainable with difficulty. A publisher named Jaggard who, in the following year, 1599, attempted to form a collection of new Shakespearean poems, did not manage to obtain more than two of the Sonnets. The words of Meres, and the 133
insignificant result of Jaggard's efforts, when viewed in connexion with the nature of these strange poems, lead to the inference that some of them were written in clusters, and others as separate exercises, either being contribu- 134
tions made by their writer to the albums of his friends, probably no two of the latter being favoured with identical compositions. There was no tradition adverse to a belief in their fragmentary character in the generation 135
immediately following the author's death, as may be 136
gathered from the arrangement found in Benson's edition 137
of 1640; and this concludes the little real evidence on the subject that has descended to us. It was reserved for the students of the present century, who have ascertained so much respecting Shakespeare that was unsuspected by his own friends and contemporaries, to

discover that his innermost earnest thoughts, his mental conflicts, and so on, are revealed in what would then be the most powerful lyrics yet given to the world. But the victim of spiritual emotions that involve criminatory reflections does not usually protrude them voluntarily on the consideration of society; and, if the personal theory be accepted, we must concede the possibility of our national dramatist gratuitously confessing his sins and revealing those of others, proclaiming his disgrace and avowing his repentance, in poetical circulars distributed by the delinquent himself amongst his most intimate friends.

There are no external testimonies of any description in favour of a personal application of the Sonnets, while there are abundant difficulties arising from the reception of such a theory. Amongst the latter is one deserving of special notice, for its investigation will tend to remove the displeasing interpretation all but universally given of two of the poems, those in which reference is supposed to be made to a bitter feeling of personal degradation allowed by Shakespeare to result from his connection with the stage. Is it conceivable that a man who encouraged a sentiment of this nature, one which must have been accompanied with a distaste and contempt for his profession, would have remained an actor years and years after any real necessity for such a course had expired? By the spring of 1602 at the latest, if not previously, he had acquired a secure and definite competence independently of his emoluments as a dramatist, and yet, eight years afterwards, in 1610, he is discovered playing in company with Burbage and Hemmings at the Blackfriars Theatre. When, in addition to this voluntary long continuance on the boards, we bear in mind the vivid interest in the stage, and in the purity of the acted drama,

which is exhibited in the well-known dialogue in Hamlet, and that the poet's last wishes included affectionate recollections of three of his fellow-players, it is difficult to believe that he could have nourished a real antipathy to his lower vocation. It is, on the contrary, to be inferred that, however greatly he may have deplored the unfortunate estimation in which the stage was held by the immense majority of his countrymen, he himself entertained a love for it that was too sincere to be repressed by contemporary disdain. If there is, amongst the defective records of the poet's life, one feature demanding special respect, it is the unflinching courage with which, notwithstanding his desire for social position, he braved public opinion in favour of a continued adherence to that which he felt was in itself a noble profession, and this at a time when it was not merely despised, but surrounded by an aggressive fanaticism that prohibited its exercise even in his own native town.

These considerations may suffice to eliminate a personal application from the two sonnets above mentioned, and as to the remainder, if the only safe method, that of discarding all mere assumptions, be strictly followed, the clearer the ideality of most of them, and the futility of arguments resting on any other basis, will be perceived. It will be observed that all the hypotheses, which aim at a complete biographical exposition of the Sonnets, necessitate the acceptance of interpretations that are too subtle for dispassionate reasoners. Even in the few instances where there is a reasonable possibility that Shakespeare was thinking of living individuals, as when he refers to an unknown poetical rival or quibbles on his own Christian name, scarcely any, if any, light is thrown on his personal feelings or character. In the latter case, it is a mere

assumption that the second Will is the youth of the opening series, or, at least, that position cannot be sustained without tortuous interpretations of much which is found in the interval. With respect to other suggested personal revelations, such as those which are thought to be chronicled in Shakespeare's addresses to the dark-eyed beauty of more than questionable reputation, —unless, with a criminal indifference to the risk of the scandal travelling to the ears of his family, he had desired to proclaim to his acquaintances his own infidelity and folly,—he might, perhaps, have repeated the words of the author of Licia, who published his own sonnets in the year 1593, and thus writes of their probable effects,—"for the matter of love, it may bee I am so devoted to some one, into whose hands these may light by chance, that she may say, which thou nowe saiest, that surelie he is in love, which if she doe, then have I the full recompence of my labour, and the poems have dealt sufficientlie for the discharge of their owne duetie." The disguise of the ideal under the personal was then, indeed, an ordinary expedient.

In the Christmas holidays of 1598-1599, three plays, one of them in all probability having been the Merry Wives of Windsor, were acted by Shakespeare's company before the Queen at Whitehall, after which they do not appear to have performed at Court until the following December, on the 26th of which month they were at Richmond Palace. The poet's distinguished friend, Lord Southampton, was in London in the autumn of this year, and no doubt favoured more than one theatre with his attendance. In a letter dated October the 11th, 1599, his lordship is alluded to as spending his time "merrily in going to plays every day."

In March, 1599, the Earl of Essex departed on his ill-starred expedition to Ireland, leaving the metropolis amidst the enthusiastic cheers of the inhabitants. He was then the most popular man in all England, hosts of the middle and lower classes regarding him as their chief hope for the redress of their grievances. At some time in May or June, whilst the suppression of the Irish was considered in his able hands a mere work of time, Shakespeare completed his play of Henry the Fifth, taking the opportunity of introducing in it a graceful compliment to the Earl, in terms which indicate that the poet himself sympathized with the thousands of Londoners who fondly expected hereafter to welcome his victorious return to England. Independently, however, of his appreciation of Essex, it was natural that the great dramatist should have taken a special interest in the course of affairs in Ireland, his great patron and friend, Lord Southampton, holding the distinguished position of General of the Horse in the Earl's army. There is no record of this drama in the year of its composition, but there is little or rather no doubt that it was produced on the diminutive boards of the Curtain 384
Theatre in the summer of 1599. It was favourably 196
received, and the character of Pistol appears to have been specially relished by the audiences. In or before 197
the August of the following year, 1600, an unsuccessful attempt was made to obtain a license for its publication, but the only copy of it, printed in the author's lifetime, was a miserably imperfect and garbled one which was surreptitiously published about that time by Millington and Busby, and transferred by them very soon afterwards to Thomas Pavier, the latter reprinting this spurious edition in 1602 and 1608. It is curious that Pavier,

who was so unscrupulous in other instances in the use of Shakespeare's name, should have refrained from
198 placing it on the title-pages of any of those impressions. There are unequivocal indications that the edition of 1600 was fraudulently printed from a copy made up from notes taken at the theatre.

Towards the close of this year, 1599, a renewed attempt was made by the poet to obtain a grant of coat-armour to his father. It was now proposed to impale the arms of Shakespeare with those of Arden, and on each occasion ridiculous statements were made respecting the claims of the two families. Both were really descended from obscure English country yeomen, but the heralds made out that the predecessors of John Shakespeare were rewarded by the Crown for distinguished services, and that his wife's ancestors were entitled to armorial bearings. Although the poet's relatives at a later date assumed his right to the coat suggested for his father in 1596, it does not appear that either of the proposed grants was ratified by the college, and certainly nothing more is heard of the Arden impalement.

The Sonnets, first mentioned in the previous year, are now again brought into notice. They had evidently obtained a recognition in literary circles, but restrictive suggestions had possibly been made to the recipients, for, as previously observed, when Jaggard, in 1599, issued a tiny volume under the fanciful title of the Passionate Pilgrim, he was apparently not enabled to secure more than two of them. These are in the first part of the book, the second being entitled "Sonnets to sundry Notes of Music," but Shakespeare's name is not attached to the latter division. The publisher seems to have had few

materials of any description that he could venture to insert under either title, for, in order to make something like a book with them, he adopted the very unusual course of having nearly the whole of the tract printed upon one side only of each leaf. Not keeping a shop, he entrusted the sale to Leake, who was then the owner of the copyright of Venus and Adonis, and who published an edition of that poem in the same year, the two little volumes no doubt being displayed together on the stall of the latter at the Greyhound in St. Paul's Churchyard. With the exception of the two sonnets above alluded to, and a few verses taken from the already published comedy of Love's Labour's Lost, Jaggard's collection does not include a single line that can be positively ascribed to the pen of the great dramatist, but much that has been ascertained to have been the composition of others. The entire publication bears evident marks of an attempted fraud, and it may well be doubted if any of its untraced contents, with perhaps three exceptions, justify the announcement of the title-page. The three pieces alluded to are those on the subject of Venus and Adonis, and these, with the beautiful little poem called the Lover's Complaint, may be included in the significant *et cetera* by which Meres clearly implies that Shakespeare was the author of other poetical essays besides those which he enumerates.

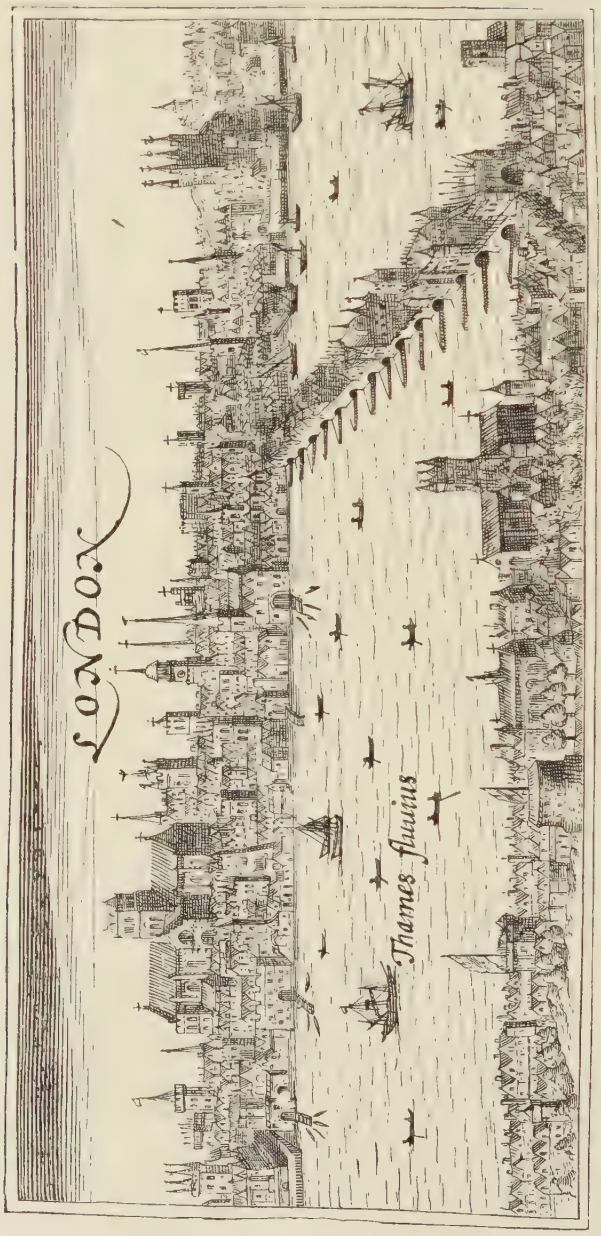
It is extremely improbable that Shakespeare, in that age of small London and few publishers, could have been ignorant of the use made of his name in the first edition of the Passionate Pilgrim. Although he may, however, have been displeased at Jaggard's unwarrantable conduct in the matter, it appears that he took no strenuous measures to induce him to disavow or suppress the

ascription in the title-page of that work. There was, it is true, no legal remedy, but there is reason for believing that,
149 in this case, at least, a personal remonstrance would have been effective. Owing, perhaps, to the apathy exhibited by Shakespeare on this occasion, a far more remarkable operation in the same kind of knavery was perpetrated in the latter part of the following year by the publisher of the First Part of the Life of Sir John Oldcastle, 1600, a play mainly concerned with the romantic adventures of Lord Cobham. Although this drama is known not
229 only to have been composed by other dramatists, but also to have belonged to a theatrical company with whom Shakespeare had then no manner of connection, it was unblushingly announced as his work by the publisher, Thomas Pavier, a shifty bookseller, residing at the grotesque sign of the Cat and Parrots near the Royal Exchange. Two editions were issued in the same year by Pavier, the one most largely distributed being that which was assigned to the pen of the great dramatist, and another to which no writer's name is attached. As there
230 are no means of ascertaining which of these editions is the first in order of publication, it is impossible to say with certainty whether the introduction of Shakespeare's name was an afterthought, or if it were withdrawn for a special reason, perhaps either at his instigation or at that of the real authors. It is most likely, however, that the anonymous impression was the first that was published, that the ascribed edition was the second, and that there
231 was no cancel of the poet's name in either.

The most celebrated theatre the world has ever seen was now to receive a local habitation and a name. The wooden structure belonging to the Burbages in Shoreditch had fallen into desuetude in 1598, and, very early in 1599,

they had pulled it down and removed the materials to Southwark, using them in the erection of a new building which was completed towards the end of the year and opened early in 1600 under the title of the Globe. Ben Jonson's comedy of Every Man Out of his Humour was one of the first plays there exhibited, the author, in an epilogue written probably for the occasion, distinctly appealing to the judgment of "the happier spirits in this faire-fild Globe," ed. 1600. Amongst the Shakespearean dramas acted at the old Globe before its destruction by fire in 1613 may be mentioned, Romeo and Juliet, Richard the Second, King Lear, Troilus and Cressida, Pericles, Othello, Macbeth and the Winter's Tale.

The exact position of the Globe Theatre will be gathered from the annexed view of London, which was published a few years after its erection, and contains by far the most interesting representation we have of the building. A person entering Southwark from London Bridge, after passing the last gateway, its poles and its traitors' heads, would proceed a short distance along the High Street. Turning then to the right, threading the streets and alleys that laid on the south of the Church and Winchester House, he would arrive at the Globe, the circular building which is seen amidst the trees in the open space below the thickly-populated fringe of houses known as the Bank-side, the theatre itself being only about two hundred yards from the margin of the river. A little further on is the Bear Garden, the flags indicating that the doors of both establishments were open to the public. It would appear from this engraving that there was in the original Globe Theatre a circular sub-structure of considerable size, perhaps constructed of



LONDON IN THE YEAR 1610, WITH THE GLOBE THEATRE IN THE FOREGROUND.

brick or masonry, which probably included a corridor with a passage to the pit or yard and staircases leading to other parts of the house. Upon this sub-structure the two wooden stories, in portions of which were included the galleries and boxes, were erected. The building was constructed mainly of wood and was partially roofed with thatch, but the larger portion of the interior was open to the sky. This latter circumstance, however, did not exclude winter performances, for, amongst the very few records in which their exact dates are mentioned, is a notice of one that took place in the month of February.

In the absence of a roof over the pit, and much of the other part of the building obliquely exposed to the rays of the sun, or to the fury of a tempest, both visitors and actors must, on occasions, have found the Globe, even in the summer time, exceedingly uncomfortable. The extent of inconvenience that was endured there in the month of February, and in muggy Southwark, almost defies conjecture. Our ancestors evidently cared little for their ease if they could but witness a piece of good acting, for it must be remembered that, in those days, there was nothing else,—no scenic effects,—to attract a metropolitan audience to the lower side of the river. The compensation was mainly due to three great advantages. In the first place, the subordinate characters were efficiently represented, Shakespeare himself not disdaining to undertake some of the minor parts; a complete intellectual representation being, in fact, a necessity in the absence of meretricious supports. In the second, there was the natural light from above, which is so essential to the accurate display of the facial expression. It is scarcely necessary to observe that the currents of air, engendered by the open roof, would have rendered a performance by

candle-light an impossibility. Then there was a building so diminutive that the remotest spectator could hardly have been distant more than a dozen yards, or thereabouts, from the front of the stage. The whole auditory were thus within a hearing distance that conveyed the faintest modulation of the performer's voice, at the same time that it demanded no inartistic effort on his part in the more sonorous utterances. Added to this, every lineament of his countenance would have been visible without telescopic aid. It was for such a theatre that Shakespeare wrote, for one wherein an actor of genius could satisfactorily develop to every one of the audience not merely the written but the unwritten words of the drama, those latter which are expressed by gesture or by the subtle language of the face and eye. There is much of the unrecorded belonging to the pages of Shakespeare that requires to be elicited in action, and no little of that much which can only be effectively rendered under conditions similar to those which prevailed at the opening of the Globe.

Intersecting the stage were two curtains of arras, one running along near the back, and the other about the centre, either being drawn as occasion required. Upon these tapestries, which are sometimes mentioned as having been in a decayed condition, were generally portrayed human figures or representations of subjects that included them. These designs had, of course, no reference to the performance, and there was no movable or other kind of scenery. The latter must obviously, as a rule, have been incompatible with the accurate production of dramas composed for a theatre in which such a material appeal to the eye was unknown. This would necessarily have been specially the case with the works of a great master of the

dramatic and theatrical arts, one whose knowledge of the unique conventionalities of the ancient stage was supreme. There can be no doubt that Shakespeare, in the composition of most of his plays, could not have contemplated the introduction of scenic accessories. It is fortunate that this should have been one of the conditions of his work, for otherwise many a speech of power and beauty, many an effective situation, would have been lost. All kinds of elaborate attempts at stage illusion tend, moreover, to divert a careful observance of the acting, while they are of no real service to the imagination of the spectator unless the author renders them necessary for the full elucidation of his meaning. That Shakespeare himself ridiculed the idea of a power to meet such a necessity, when he was writing for theatres like the Curtain or the Globe, is apparent from the opening chorus to Henry the Fifth; and his words equally apply to the most perfect theatrical representations that could be given of "the vasty fields of France," or of the combat "that did affright the air at Agincourt." It is obvious that he wished attention to be concentrated on the players and their utterances, and that all surroundings, excepting those which could be indicated by the rude properties of the day, should be idealistic.

Shakespeare's company acted before Queen Elizabeth at Richmond Palace on Twelfth Night and Shrove Sunday, 1600, and at Whitehall on the 26th of December. On March the 6th they were at Somerset House, and there performed, before Lord Hunsdon and some foreign ambassadors, another drama on the subject of Oldcastle. A few weeks after the last occurrence, the poet, who was then in London, brought an action against one John Clayton to recover the sum of £7, and duly succeeded

in obtaining a verdict in his favour. This is one of the several evidences that distinctly prove the great dramatist to have been a man of business, thoroughly realizing the necessity of careful attention to his pecuniary affairs. Here we have the highest example of all to tell us that financial discretion is not incompatible with the possession of literary genius.

The humours of Justice Shallow, which had for some time past been so highly appreciated at the metropolitan theatres, were first published to the world in August, 1600, and, by a singular coincidence, in the very same
365 month the remains of his prototype, Sir Thomas Lucy, were laid to rest in the little village of Charlecote. He had died at the neighbouring family-seat in July, and was buried with great pomp on the seventh of the following month, three of the Heralds attending from London to assist in the solemnities. Amongst them was William Camden, who was then Clarencieux, "the most learned and honoured" friend of Ben Jonson; and it is worthy of remark that Sir Thomas's immediate successors were men of considerable literary tastes. His eldest son, in a will drawn up in this year, 1600, speaks of "all my French and Italian books," and these were added, after his death in 1605, to the library of the third Sir Thomas Lucy of those times. The latter, who was the "much honored and beloved" object in 1610 of an extravagant eulogy by John Davies of Hereford, is mentioned as having been friendly to authors, and he was so fond of his books that an emblematical sample of his library was introduced into the composition of his sepulchral monument. There is, however, no reliable evidence or tradition to indicate that he was ever at any time even on speaking terms
366 with the great dramatist, and, indeed, in days when the

maintenance of personal dignity was an extravagant consideration with the aristocracy, it is not likely that the poet's biting satires would have been easily forgotten. Above all, the facetious reference to the armorial bearings would no doubt have been considered by so proud a family as the Lucys a special example of disreputable insolence.

One of the most exquisite of Shakespeare's comedies, As You Like It, was most likely produced in the summer 56
of this year, and was, as might be expected, favourably received. The celebrated speech of Jacques on the seven ages of man would have had an appropriate significance when uttered below the Latin motto under the sign of the Globe Theatre, but the coincidence was no doubt accidental. An attempt to publish this drama was frustrated by an appeal to the Stationers' Company, a fact which testifies to its popularity; and one of its ditties was 57
set to music by Thomas Morley, an eminent composer of the day, who published it, with some others of a cognate description, in his First Booke of Ayres, or Little Short Songs, a small thin folio volume printed at London in the same year, 1600.

According to a tradition mentioned by several writers of the last century, there was a character in As You Like It that was performed by the author of the comedy. "One of Shakespeare's younger brothers," says Oldys, "who lived to a good old age, even some years, as I compute, after the restoration of King Charles the Second, would in his younger days come to London to visit his brother Will, as he called him, and be a spectator of him as an actor in some of his own plays. This custom, as his brother's fame enlarged, and his dramatick entertainments grew the greatest support of our principal, if not of

all our theatres, he continued, it seems, so long after his brother's death, as even to the latter end of his own life. The curiosity at this time of the most noted actors to learn something from him of his brother, &c., they justly held him in the highest veneration ; and it may be well believed, as there was besides a kinsman and descendant of the family, who was then a celebrated actor among them, this opportunity made them greedily inquisitive into every little circumstance, more especially in his dramatick character, which his brother could relate of him. But he, it seems, was so stricken in years, and possibly his memory so weakened with infirmities, which might make him the easier pass for a man of weak intellects, that he could give them but little light into their enquiries; and all that could be recollected from him of his brother Will in that station was the faint, general and almost lost ideas he had of having once seen him act a part in one of his own comedies, wherein, being to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping and unable to walk, that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company who were eating, and one of them sung a song." This account contains several discrepancies, but there is reason for believing that it includes a glimmering of truth which is founded on an earlier tradition.

The earliest notice of the comedy of Much Ado about Nothing occurs in the entry in which we also first hear of As You Like It. Its attempted publication was stopped by an application made to the Stationers' Company on or before August the 4th, 1600, but, on the 23rd of the same month, Wise and Aspley succeeded in obtaining a license. It is not known if the prohibition was

directed against the latter publication and afterwards removed, or whether it refers to a fraudulent attempt by some other bookseller to issue a surreptitious copy. Although Much Ado about Nothing was not reprinted in the author's lifetime, there is no doubt of its continued popularity. 60

The scene of this comedy is laid in Messina, but the satire on the constables obviously refers to those of the 61
England of the author's own time. Aubrey, whose statements are always to be cautiously received, asserts that Shakespeare "happened to take" the "humour" of one of them "at Grendon in Bucks, which is in the road from London to Stratford, and there was living that constable about 1642." The eccentric biographer no doubt 62
refers to Dogberry or Verges, but if the poet really had a special individual in his mind when portraying either of those characters, it is not likely that the Grendon constable could have been the person so honoured, for unless he had attained an incredible age in the year 1642, he would have been too young for the prototype. It is far more likely that the satire was generally applicable to the English constables of the author's period, to such as were those in the neighbourhood of London at the time of his arrival there, and who are so graphically thus described in a letter from Lord Burghley to Sir Francis Walsingham, written in 1586,—"as I came from London homeward in my coach, I saw at every town's end the number of ten or twelve standing with long staves, and, until I came to Enfield, I thought no other of them but that they had stayed for avoiding of the rain, or to drink at some alehouses, for so they did stand under pentices at alehouses; but at Enfield, finding a dozen in a plump when there was no rain, I bethought myself that

they were appointed as watchmen for the apprehending of such as are missing; and thereupon I called some of them to me apart, and asked them wherefore they stood there, and one of them answered, to take three young men; and, demanding how they should know the persons,—Marry, said they, one of the parties hath a hooked nose; and have you, quoth I, no other mark? No, said they. Surely, sir, these watchmen stand so openly in plumps as no suspected person will come near them, and if they be no better instructed but to find three persons by one of them having a hooked nose, they may miss thereof."

It was towards the close of the present year, 1600, or at some time in the following one, that Shakespeare, for the first and only time, came forward in the avowed character of a philosophical writer. One Robert Chester
208 was the author of a long and tedious poem, which was issued in 1601, under the title of,—"Love's Martyr or Rosalins Complaint, allegorically shadowing the truth of Love in the constant fate of the Phœnix and Turtle," and "to these are added some new compositions of severall moderne writers, whose names are subscribed to their severall workes, upon the first subject; viz., the Phœnix and Turtle." The latter were stated, in a separate title-page, to have been "done by the best and chiefest of our moderne writers, with their names subscribed to their particular workes; never before extant; and now first consecrated by them all generally to the love and merite of the true-noble knight, Sir John Salisburie",—the names of Shakespeare, Marston, Chapman, and Jonson being attached to the recognized
209 pieces of this latter series. The contribution of the great dramatist is a remarkable poem in which he makes a

notice of the obsequies of the phœnix and turtle-dove subservient to the delineation of spiritual union. It is generally thought that, in his own work, Chester meditated a personal allegory, but, if that be the case, there is nothing to indicate that Shakespeare participated in the design, nor even that he had endured the punishment of reading Love's Martyr.

The commencement of this year, 1601, is memorable for the development and suppression of the Essex conspiracy, one of the most singular events of the Queen's reign, and one in which Shakespeare's company was transiently implicated. The general history of this remarkable movement is too familiar to us all to sanction its repetition, but it is not so generally known that the Earl's friends, in their anxiety to seize every opportunity of influencing public opinion in favour of their schemes, negociated with the Lord Chamberlain's Servants for the representation at the Globe Theatre of a drama that evinced a political significance in its treatment of the deposition of Richard the Second. The conspirators 287
had selected as the one most suitable for their design 288
a play that had been already exhibited on the stage, but, in a discussion on the subject with a few of the actors, it was strongly urged by the latter that the composition in question had so out-grown its popu- 290
larity that a serious loss on its revival would inevitably accrue; and, under these circumstances, it was arranged that fourty shillings should be paid to the company in augmentation of their receipts on the occasion. The interview at which this compromise was effected took place on Friday, the Sixth of February, a "play of the deposing and killing of King Richard," one which also dealt, it would appear, with a portion of the reign 289

of his successor, being represented at the Globe on the afternoon of the following day; but none of the persons engaged in these transactions had then the remotest idea that the latter were to be immediately followed by the premature outbreak of the insurrection.

The rapidity, indeed, with which events now moved have most likely hidden from us for ever the contemporary light in which the proceedings at the Globe were viewed; but that the public exhibition at this juncture of the history of the deposition of Richard was an unwonted bold step on the part of the company cannot admit of a question. Some of its members, at all events, and most probably all, must have been aware of the Queen's preternatural sensitiveness in everything that related to that history; so that it is difficult to avoid the impression that the leaders of the theatre shared in the all but universal desire of the community for the restoration of Essex to power. It is true that Shakespeare's friend and colleague, Augustine Phillipps, in an affidavit sworn before three of the judges eleven days afterwards, assigns the initiative of the pecuniary offer to the conspirators, but that offer of fourty shillings, if viewed on either side as a bribe, was certainly too moderate in amount to have overcome the scruples of unwilling agents in so considerable a risk, and too much reliance should not be placed upon the terms of a document that may have been signed under conditions that admitted of serious peril to the witness and his friends. Now that the game was irretrievably lost, and the power of a despotic government again supreme, it is most likely that Phillipps dexterously said as little about the affair as he dared, and yet just enough to save himself and the other actors at the Globe

from being, to use an expressive phrase of the time, "wrecked on the Essex coast." That they altogether escaped this calamity may be gathered from the fact that they performed before the Queen at Richmond Palace on Shrove Tuesday, the twenty-fourth of February, the very evening before the lamented death of Essex; but it should be borne in mind that the selection of that movable feast-day for the performance was merely owing to the following of a long-established custom, not the result of a special order; and Elizabeth, now that the dangers to which she had been exposed were over, had too much wisdom, whatever she may have known or thought respecting their doings on the seventh, to make an impolitic display of superfluous animosities. Least of all is it probable that she would have been inclined, excepting in a case of dire emergency, to have visited her displeasure upon the humble ministers of one of her favourite amusements, persons, moreover, who were then regarded in about the same light with jugglers and buffoons. As to her appearance at a theatrical representation the night before the execution, that was not more unseemly than her amusing herself by playing on the virginals the following morning, all this outward heartlessness emanating from a determination to assume before the Court a demeanour of indifference to the cruel destiny of her quondam favourite.

That the poet was intimately acquainted, so far at least as the extreme social distinctions of the age permitted, with some of the leading members of the conspiracy, may be fairly assumed. It is all but impossible that he should not have been well-known to the readily-accessible Essex, —the object of the graceful compliment in the last act of Henry the Fifth,—one who was not only distinguished

by his widely extended impartial and generous patronage of literature and its votaries, but the bosom friend of Shakespeare's own Mæcenas. Then there were the Earl of Rutland, the frequent companion of the latter at the public theatres, and Sir Charles Percy, who, only a few weeks before the performance at the Globe, had shown how deeply he had been impressed by the humour of the Second Part of Henry the Fourth. But there is no evidence that tends to associate the great dramatist with any kind of participation in the furtherance of the objects of the conspirators beyond, of course, the natural inference that he shared with his colleagues the responsibility of their theatrical proceedings on the seventh of February.

Apart from all this, even if it were thought possible that Shakespeare could have been altogether ignorant of the treasonable designs of Essex and Southampton, there can be no doubt that his obligations to and relations with the latter, irrespective of other considerations, made him regard the memorable events of the following day,—in whatever way they may have come to his knowledge, either partially as an eye-witness or otherwise,—with feelings of the deepest anxiety and personal interest. The history of that Sunday thus becomes in a manner a portion of his own biography.—It was between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning that the two earls and a considerable number of their leading adherents commenced, within a few paces of what is now the junction of Essex Street with the Strand, that which it is the fashion to term their irrational and reckless march into the City; but that they had over-prized the courage rather than the friendly disposition of its inhabitants, and that the Government had a narrow escape, may be gathered from the remark-

able fact that, after a kind of tentative ramble of more than five hours in duration, and in spite of his having been formally proclaimed a traitor, Essex, in company with Southampton and a remnant of his party, contrived to escape in safety at Queenhithe. The story has been recorded in a variety of forms that involve obscure discrepancies, but perhaps one of the most reliable versions, as it is certainly one of the most lucid, is that which is preserved in a nearly contemporary manuscript that has hitherto been allowed to remain unpublished, and which gives an account of the political excursion in the following terms,—"upon Sunday, beeing the eighth of February, in the yeare of our Lord God, 1601, about ten of the clocke in the morning, the Lord Keeper, the Earle of Worcester, Sir William Knowls and Popham, Lord Cheefe Justice of England, were sent to Essex Howse with a message from her Majestie that Robert, Earle of Essex, should speedily dissolve his company, and he himselfe should presently come to the Court, with promise that his greefs should gratiously be hard; at whose comming the gates were shut and were guarded, yet they themselves were suffered to enter, but not one of theire followers admitted thereunto;—the Councell thus beeing admitted, the Earle of Essex mett them in the court, who, after some salutacions past, conducted them through many roomes into a place well guarded with men and munition, whome, after some words past betweene them, the Earle of Essex left as prisoners to the charge of Sir Gillam Merricke, Sir John Davis and Sir Frauncis Tressum;—this beeing donne, the Earle of Essex, with the Earles of Rutland, Southampton and Bedford, the Lord Sands and the Lord Mounteagle, Sir Charles Davers and Sir Christopher Blunt, with many other

knights and gentlemen of greate blood, to the nomber of some sixty or thereabouts, issued forth towards Ludgate, crying out by the way as they went, *for the Queene, my Mistres*, giving out besids that the Earle of Essex should have been murdered the night before in his owne house by Sir Walter Rawleigh, the Lord Cobham and others;—comming after this sort unto Ludgate, he found the gate shut, the Lord Mayor, upon notice given unto him before, causing it so to be, yet, upon his intreaty and their crye that they were for the Queene, giving out by the way the former intended murder, with protestacion that they came into the Citty only for safty of their lives, the gates were opened unto them, which having obteined, they marched into the Citty on foote, armed some with swords, some with targetts, and some fewe with French pistolls;—thus marching through Cheapside, at length arriving unto Sherrife Smyths howse in Fanchurche-streete, and having there stayed some tyme, after retourned into Gratious-street, where, after a little stay beeing made, his company was increased well neare to three hundreth;—in which tyme tydings thereof were brought unto the Court, and the Lord Burleigh was presently dispatched with the King of Herraults into London to proclaime the Earle of Essex and all his complices traytors, and to pardon all such as should thereupon forsake him; so comming in this sort to Gratious-street, the Lord Burleigh was forced to retire, his horse under him beeing hurte with a shott, at which tyme the Lord of Bedford with the Lord Cromwell left him, and with them many others;—the Earle of Essex, seeing his company so decreased, came towards Ludgate, thinking to have passed the same way home to his howse that he

came, but at Ludgate Chaine he was so soare charged, his page, Mr. Henry Tracy, beeing then slaine, with some others on the other side, and divers others wounded, Sir Christopher Blunt beeing sore wounded in the head that he was forced to retire, from whence he hastned backe to Queene-Hive, where, taking so many boats as they could gett, cutting the roaps asunder, they rowed themselves to Essex Howse, and others that could get no boats made shift to save themselves by flight, it beeing at that instant about fowre of the clocke in the afternoone and past." The route taken by the Earls will be best illustrated by Norden's plan of 1593, care being taken to bear in mind that Essex House was then known under the name of a previous owner, the Earl of Leicester.

The author of the interesting narrative just quoted, who appears to have enjoyed special facilities for obtaining correct information, continues the story in the following words,—"the lords whome before he had left prisonners were all, by a token given unto Sir Fardinando George by the Earle of Essex for the deliverance of the Lord Cheefe Justice, set at liberty;—the lords, beeing delivered, tooke with them Sir Fardinando George, and went unto the Courte by water, where the lords with him were no sooner come but newes was brought that the earles were retourned backe to Essex House, whereupon the Lord Burleigh was sent to assault the house on the streete side, and the Lord Admirall, Sir Robert Sidney, Sir Robert Herfield and Sir Thomas Monson on the water side, who soone after possessed themselves of the garden;—the Earle of Essex, when he sawe that my Lord Admiralls company had possessed themselves of the garden, hee, with fowre or five others, shewed themselves on the leads,

and having walked three or fowr turnes, still florishing their swords as they went, they retourned in againe;—the Lord Burleigh on th'other side had broken the gates and entred the Court, in which encounter some common souldiers were slaine;—the dores of the howse were so fortifyed within that noe violence could breake them open, and in the windowes were set books, by which meanes the shott, beeing strangled in the passage, could be little offensive unto them, yett by chaunce Captaine Owen Salsbury was slaine with a shott from Saint Clements Church steeple as he was neere the gallery windowe towards the street;—about six of the clocke at night the Lord Admirall sent Sir Robert Sidney to sommon the Earle of Essex and those that were with him to yeeld themselves, and after the drumme had sounded a parly, the Earle of Southampton came on the leads and asked Sir Robert Sidney, calling him Cosen Sidney, what he would have, who answered, he sommoned them from the Lord Admirall, her Majesties Liuetennant-Generall, to yeeld themselves, to whom the Earle of Southampton replyed,—deare cossen Sidney, to whome would you have us to yeeld?—to our enimies?—that were to thrust ourselves into daunger willingly;—noe, sayd Sir Robert Sydney, but you must yeeld yourselves to her Majestie;—that would we willingly doe, sayd the Earle of Southampton, but that therby we should confes ourselves guilty before we have offended; yet, if my Lord Admirall will yeeld us honorable hostage for our safe retourne to this place, wee will goe and present ourselves before her Majestie, to whome, God knowes, we never intended the least harme, and whose royall disposicion we knowe to be such that, if wee might but freely declare our minds before her, she would pardon us and blame them that were

most worthy, those athiests and caterpillers, I meane, who layed plotts to bereave us of our lives." The writer then proceeds to recount the conversation between Sydney and the two earls respecting the demand for hostages and the conditions under which the ladies then in Essex House were to be released, this being followed by an account of the surrender of the luckless noblemen under the Lord Admiral's threat to meet further resistance by the destruction of the mansion and its inmates, a feat that was to be accomplished by "store of shott, powder and ordinance, brought thither from the Towre," MS. ibid. It is unnecessary to give the various speeches at length, but there is one of them which includes an example of the words *no hope* treated substantively, a mode of expression heretofore imagined to be peculiar to Shakespeare, and which should not be omitted. "By standing upon your defence," observed Sydney, "there is noe hope, but by submitting there is some afforded you;" an overture which was thus acknowledged by Lord Southampton,—"well, cosen, that hope is so little that, unles wee have hostages, we will rather make choice of this *noe hope* then of that hope." The interval that passed between this eventful day and the commutation of the sentence upon his noble friend must have been a period of distressing anxiety to the great dramatist.

The poet's father,—Mr. Johannes Shakspeare, as he is called in the register,—was buried at Stratford-on-Avon on September the 8th, 1601; having no doubt expired a few days previously at his residence in Henley Street, which is noticed so recently as 1597 as being then in his occupation. He is mentioned as having been concerned with others in the former year in the discussion of matters respecting an action brought by Sir Edward Greville

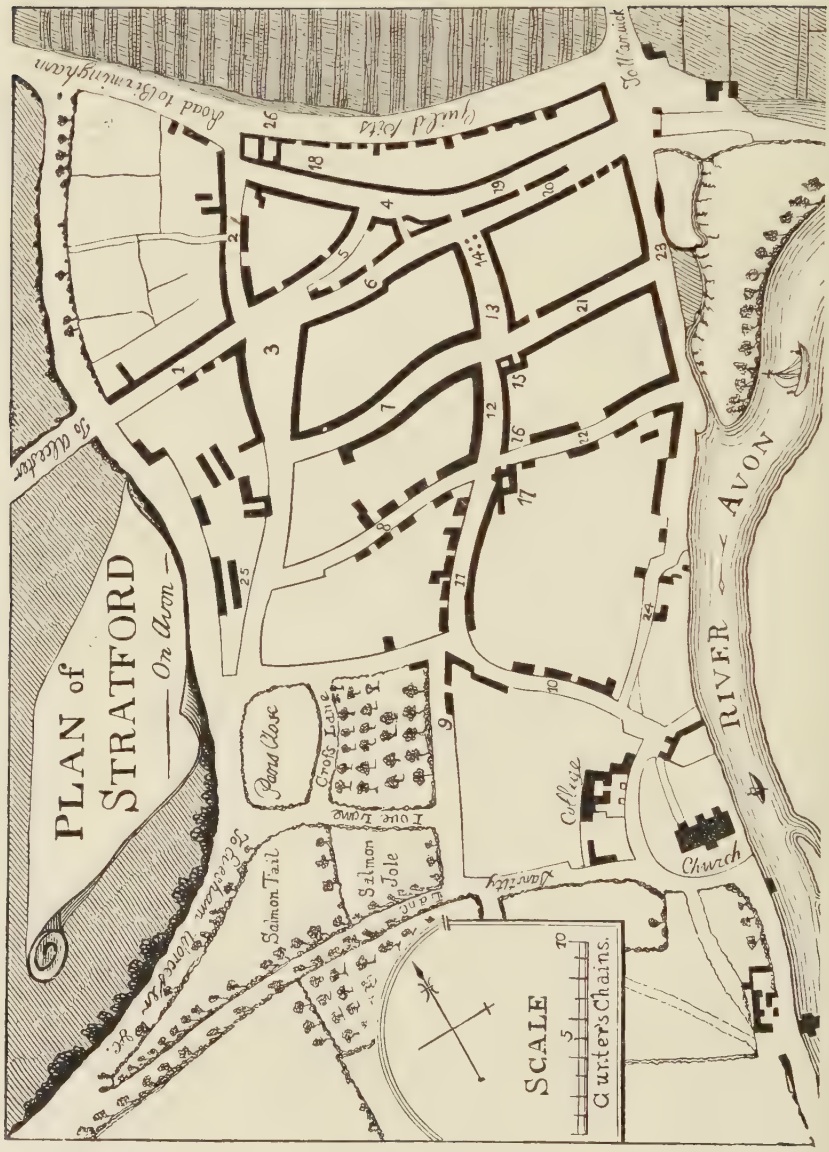
against the town, so there are no reasons for believing that his latest years were accompanied by decrepitude. In all probability the old man died intestate, and the great dramatist appears to have succeeded, as his eldest son and heir-at-law, to the ownership of the freehold tenements in Henley Street. It is not likely that the widow acquired more than her right to dower in that property, but there can be no hesitation in assuming that such a claim would have been merged in a liberal allowance from her son.

Twelfth Night, the perfection of English comedy and
68 the most fascinating drama in the language, was produced
69 in the season of 1601-2, most probably on January the 5th. There is preserved a curious notice of its performance in the following month before the benchers of the Middle
70 Temple in their beautiful hall, nearly the only building now remaining in London in which it is known that any of Shakespeare's dramas were represented during the author's lifetime. The record of this interesting occurrence is embedded in the minutely written contemporary diary of one John Manningham, a student at that inn of court, who appears to have been specially impressed with the character of Malvolio. "A good practice in it," he observes, "to make the steward believe his lady widow was in love with him, by counterfeiting a letter as from his lady in general terms, telling him what she liked best in him, and prescribing his gesture in smiling, his apparel, &c., and then, when he came to practice, making him believe they took him to be mad." This representation of Twelfth Night took place at the Feast of the Purification, February the 2nd, one of the two grand festival days of the lawyers, on which occasion professional actors were annually engaged at the Middle Temple, the then liberal

sum of ten pounds being given to them for a single performance. There is no doubt that the comedy was performed by the Lord Chamberlain's servants, and very little that Shakespeare himself was one of the actors who were engaged. Twelfth Night was appreciated at an early period as one of the author's most popular creations. There is not only the testimony of Manningham in its favour, but Leonard Digges, in the 71
verses describing this most attractive of Shakespeare's acting dramas, expressly alludes to the estimation in which the part of Malvolio was held by the frequenters of the theatre.

The Queen kept her Court at Whitehall in the Christmas of 1601-1602, and, during the holidays, four plays, one of them most probably Twelfth Night, were exhibited before her by Shakespeare's company. In the following May, the great dramatist purchased from the 206
Combes, for the sum of £320, one hundred and seven

acres of land near Stratford-on-Avon, but, owing to his 117
absence from that town, the conveyance was delivered for his use to his brother Gilbert. It is not likely, indeed, that he visited the locality within any brief period after this transaction, for otherwise the counterpart of the indenture, which was duly engrossed in complete readiness for the purchaser's attestation, would 207
hardly have been permitted to remain without his

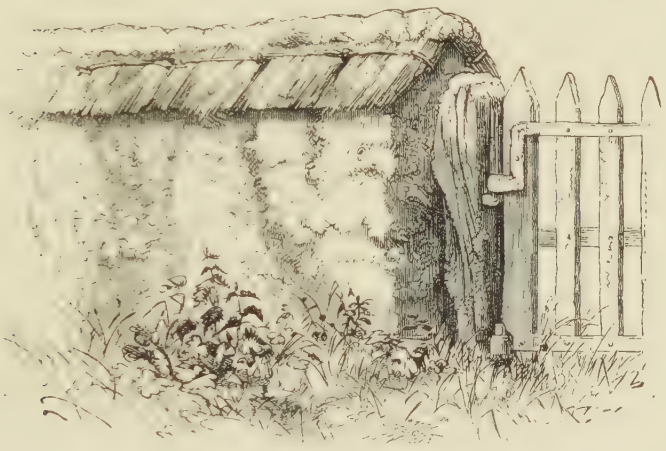

PLAN of STRATFORD
On Avon
RIVER AVON
Road to Bidford
Road to Alcester
Road to Warwick
Foot Path
College
Church
Chapel Lane
Cross Lane
Old House
New Place
Chapel Close
Garden
Orchard
Salmon Tail
Salmon Jole
SCALE
Chains

No general plan of Stratford-upon-Avon, executed before the middle of the eighteenth century, is known to exist. The one here given in fac-simile was taken about the year 1768 by a caligraphist of the name of Winter, and it clearly appears, from the local records, that there had then been no material alteration in either the form or the extent of the town since the days of Elizabeth. It may, therefore, be accepted as a reliable guide to the locality as it existed in the poet's own time, when the number of inhabited houses, exclusive of mere hovels, could not have much exceeded five hundred. The following is a copy of the reference-explanations which are found under the original plan: 1. Moor Town's End;—2. Henley Lane:—3. Rother Market;—4. Henley Street;—5. Meer Pool Lane;—6. Wood Street;—7. Ely Street or Swine Street;—8. Scholar's Lane alias Tinker's Lane;—9. Bull Lane;—10. Street call'd Old Town;—11. Church Street;—12. Chapel Street;—13. High Street;—14. Market Cross;—15. Town Hall;—16. Place where died Shakespeare;—17. Chapel, Public Schools, &c.;—18. House where was Shakespeare born;—19. Back Bridge Street;—20. Fore Bridge Street;—21. Sheep Street;—22. Chapel Lane;—23. Buildings call'd Water Side;—24. Southam's Lane;—25. Dissenting Meeting;—26. White Lion.

signature. But this was not the only legal business of the year in which the poet was interested. It appears that a flaw had been discovered in the validity of his title to New Place, the vendor's relative, Hercules Underhill, possessing some unknown kind of interest that had not been effectually barred by the terms of the conveyance. In order to meet this difficulty it was necessary for a fine to be levied through which the absolute ownership of the purchaser should be recognized by Hercules, and of so much importance was this considered that, upon the deforciant representing in June, 1602, that the state of his health prevented his undertaking a journey to London, a special commission was arranged for obtaining his acknowledgment. This important ratification was procured in Northamptonshire in the following October, Shakespeare no doubt being responsible for the considerable expenditure that must have been incurred by these transactions, which, there is reason to believe,
332 were conducted exclusively by his own professional advisers.

The pecuniary resources of Shakespeare must now have been very considerable, for, notwithstanding the serious expenditure incurred by this last acquisition, a few months afterwards he is recorded as the purchaser of a small copyhold estate near his country residence. On September the 28th, 1602, at a Court Baron of the Manor of Rowington, one Walter Getley transferred to the poet a cottage and garden which were situated in
271 Chapel Lane opposite the lower grounds of New Place. They covered the space of a quarter of an acre, with a frontage in the lane of fourty feet, and were held practically in fee simple at the annual rental
272 of two shillings and sixpence. It appears from the

roll that Shakespeare did not attend the manorial court then held at Rowington, there being a stipulation that the estate should remain in the hands of the lady of the manor until he appeared in person to complete the transaction with the usual formalities. At a later period he was admitted to the copyhold, and then he surrendered it to the use of himself for life, with a 273
remainder to his two daughters in fee. The cottage



was replaced about the year 1690 by a brick and tiled building, and no representation of the original tenement is known to be in existence. The latter, in all probability, had, like most other cottages at Stratford-on-Avon in the poet's time, a thatched roof supported by mud walls. The adjoining boundary wall that enclosed the vicarage garden on the lane side continued to be one of mud 221
until the latter part of the eighteenth century.

In the spring of this year, 1602, our national tragedy, 156
known originally under the title of the Revenge of Ham- 157
let, Prince of Denmark, was in course of representation 158

THE

Tragicall Hiſtorie of HAMLET

Prince of Denmarke

By William Shake-ſpeare.

As it hath beene diuerſe times acted by his Highneſſe ſeruants in the Cittie of London : as alſo in the two Vniuerſities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elſe-where

At London printed for N.L. and Iohn Trundell.
1603.

THE
Tragicall Hiſtorie of
HAMLET,
Prince of Denmarke.

By William Shakeſpeare.

Newly imprinted and enlarged to almoſt as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.

AT LONDON,
Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be ſold at his ſhoppe vnder Saint Dunſtons Church in Fleetſtreet. 1604.

159 by the Lord Chamberlain's players at the Globe
160 Theatre, and had then, in all probability, been recently
161 composed. Its popularity led to an unsuccessful attempt by Roberts, a London publisher, to include it amongst his dramatic issues, but it was not printed until the
162 summer of the following year, 1603, when two booksellers, named Ling and Trundell, employed an inferior
163 and clumsy writer to work up, in his own fashion, what
164 scraps of the play had been furtively obtained from short-
165 hand notes or other memoranda into the semblance of a perfect drama, which they had the audacity to publish as Shakespeare's own work. It is possible, however, that
387 the appearance of this surreptitious edition, which contains
166 several abnormous variations from the complete work, may have led the sharers of the theatre to be less averse to the publication of their own copy. At all events, Ling in some way obtained an authentic transcript of the play in the following year, and it was "newly imprinted" by
167 Roberts for that publisher, "enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect coppie," 1604. The appearance of subsequent editions and various early notices evince the favour in which the tragedy was held by the public in the time of its author.
168 The hero was admirably portrayed by Burbage, and has ever since, as then, been accepted as the leading character of the greatest actor of the passing day. It is worth
169 notice that the incident of Hamlet leaping into Ophelia's grave, now sometimes omitted, was considered in Burbage's time to be one of the most striking features of the acted tragedy; and there is a high probability that a singular little by-play drollery, enacted by the First Grave-digger, was also introduced at the Globe perform-
170 ances. The once popular stage-trick of that personage

taking off a number of waistcoats one after the other, previously to the serious commencement of his work, is an artifice which has only been laid aside in comparatively recent years.

In February, 1603, Roberts, one of the Shakespearean printers, attempted to obtain a license for an impression of the play of Troilus and Cressida, then in the course of representation by the Lord Chamberlain's servants. The subject had been dramatized by Decker and Chettle for 123
the Lord Admiral's servants in 1599, but although the two companies may have been then, as in former years, on friendly terms, there is no probability that their copyrights were exchangeable, so that the application made
by Roberts is not likely to refer to the jointly-written 124
drama. When that printer applied for a license for the publication of the new tragedy, he had not obtained, nor is there any reason for believing that he ever succeeded in procuring, the company's sanction to his projected speculation. At all events, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida was not printed until early in the year 1609, when two other publishers, Bonian and Walley, having surreptitiously procured a copy, ventured on its publication, and, in the hope of attracting purchasers, they had the audacity to state, in an unusual preface, that it had never been represented on the stage. They even appear to exult in having treacherously obtained a manuscript 125
of the tragedy, but the triumph of their artifices was of brief duration. The deceptive temptation they offered of novelty must have been immediately exposed, and a pressure was no doubt exerted upon them by the company, who probably withdrew their opposition on payment of compensation, for, by the 28th of January, the printers had received a license from the Lord Chamberlain for the 126

publication. The preface was then entirely cancelled, and the falsity of the assertion that Troilus and Cressida had never been acted was conspicuously admitted by the re-issue professing to appear "as it *was* acted by the King's Majesty's Servants at the Globe,"—when is not stated. The suppressed preface could hardly have been written had the drama been one of the acting plays of the season of 1608–9, and, indeed, the whole tenor of that preamble is against the validity of such an assumption.

There can be little doubt that Troilus and Cressida was originally produced at the Globe in the winter season of 1602-1603. The career of the illustrious sovereign, who had so highly appreciated the dramas of our national poet, was now drawing to an end. Shakespeare's company, who had acted before her at Whitehall on December the 26th, 1602, were summoned to Richmond for another performance on the following Candlemas Day, February the 2nd, 1603. The Queen was then in a very precarious state of health, and this was the last occasion on which the poet could have had the opportunity of appearing before her. Elizabeth died on March the 24th, but, amongst the numerous poetical tributes to her memory that were elicited by her decease, there was not one from the pen of Shakespeare.

The poetical apathy exhibited by the great dramatist on this occasion, although specially lamented by a contemporary writer, can easily be accounted for in more than one way; if, indeed, an explanation is needed beyond a reference to the then agitated and bewildered state of the public mind. The company to which he belonged might have been absent, as several others were at the time, on a provincial tour. Again, they were no doubt intent on obtaining the patronage of the new

sovereign, and may have fancied that too enthusiastic a display of grief for Elizabeth would have been considered inseparable from a regret for the change of dynasty. However that may be, James the First arrived in London on May the 7th, 1603, and ten days afterwards he granted, by bill of Privy Signet, a license to Shakespeare and the other members of his company to perform in London at the Globe Theatre, and, in the provinces, at town-halls or other suitable buildings. They itinerated a good deal during the next few months, records of their performances being found at Bath, Coventry, Shrewsbury, and Ipswich. It was either in this year, or early in the following one, and under this license, that the company, including the poet himself, acted at the Globe in Ben Jonson's new comedy of Sejanus.

The King was staying in December, 1603, at Wilton, the seat of one of Shakespeare's patrons, William Herbert, third earl of Pembroke, and on the second of that month the company had the honour of performing before the distinguished party then assembled in that noble mansion. In the following Christmas holidays, 1603-1604, they were acting on several occasions at Hampton Court, the play selected for representation on the first evening of the new year being mentioned by one of the audience under the name of Robin Goodfellow, possibly a familiar title of the Midsummer Night's Dream. Their services were again invoked by royalty at Candlemas and on Shrove Sunday, on the former occasion at Hampton Court before the Florentine ambassador, and on the latter at Whitehall. At this time they were prohibited from acting in or near London, in fear that public gatherings might imperil the diminution of the pestilence, the King making the

company on that account the then very handsome present of thirty pounds.

Owing in some degree to the severe plague of 1603, and more perhaps to royal disinclination, the public entry of the King into the metropolis did not take place until nearly a year after the death of Elizabeth. It was on the 15th of March, 1604, that James undertook his formal march from the Tower to Westminster, amidst emphatic demonstrations of welcome, and passing every now and then under the most elaborate triumphal arches London had ever seen. In the royal train were the nine actors to whom the special license had been granted the previous year, including of course Shakespeare and his three friends, Burbage, Hemmings, and Condell. Each of them was presented with four yards and a half of scarlet cloth, the usual dress allowance to players belonging to the household. The poet and his colleagues were termed the King's Servants, and took rank at Court amongst the Grooms of the Chamber.

Shortly after this event the poet made a visit to Stratford-on-Avon. It appears, from a declaration filed in the local court, that he had sold in that town to one Philip Rogers several bushels of malt at various times between March the 27th and the end of May, 1604, and that the latter did not, or could not, pay the debt thus incurred, amounting to £1. 15s. 10d. Shakespeare had sold him malt to the value of £1. 19s. 10d., and, on June 25th, Rogers borrowed two shillings of the poet at Stratford, making in all £2. 1s. 10d. Six shillings of this were afterwards paid, and the action was brought to recover the balance.

In the following August the great dramatist was in London, there having been a special order, issued in that

month by desire of the King, for every member of the company to be in attendance at Somerset House. This was on the occasion of the visit of the Spanish ambassador to England, but it may be perhaps that their professional services were not required, for no notice of them has been discovered.

The tragedy of Othello, originally known under the 127
title of the Moor of Venice, is first heard of in 1604, it 128
having been performed by the King's players, who then 129
included Shakespeare himself, before the Court, in the Banqueting House at Whitehall, on the evening of Hallowmas day, November the first. This drama was very popular, Leonard Digges speaking of the audiences preferring it to the laboured compositions of Ben Jonson. In 1609, a stage-loving parent, one William Bishop, of 130
Shoreditch, who had perhaps been taken with the representation of the tragedy, gave the name of Othello's perfect wife to one of his twin daughters. A performance at the Globe in the April of the following year, 1610, was honoured with the presence of the German ambassador and his suite, and it was again represented at Court before Prince Charles, the Princess Elizabeth, and the Elector Palatine, in May, 1613. These scattered notices, accidentally preserved, doubtlessly out of many others that might have been recorded, are indicative of its continuance as an acting play; a result that may, without disparagement to the author, be attributed in some measure to the leading character having been assigned to the most accomplished tragic actor of the day,—Richard Burbage. The name of the first performer of Iago is not known, but 131
there is a curious tradition, which can be traced as far back 132
as the close of the seventeenth century, to the effect that the part was originally undertaken by a popular comedian,

and that Shakespeare adapted some of the speeches of that character to the peculiar talents of the actor.

The company are found playing at Oxford in the early
27 part of the summer of 1604. In the Christmas holidays of the same year, on the evening of December the 26th, the comedy of Measure for Measure was performed before the Court at Whitehall, and if it were written for that special occasion, it seems probable that the lines, those in which Angelo deprecates the thronging of the multitude to royalty, were introduced out of special consideration to James the First, who, as is well known, had a great dis-
28 like to encountering crowds of people. The lines in the mouth of Angelo appear to be somewhat forced, while their metrical disposition is consistent with the idea that they might have been the result of an afterthought.

Shakespeare's company performed a number of dramas before the Court early in the following year, 1605, including several of his own. About the same time a curious old play, termed the London Prodigal, which had been previously acted by them, was impudently submitted by Nathaniel Butter to the reading public as one of the compositions of the great dramatist. On May the 4th, a few days before his death, the poet's colleague, Augustine Phillips, made his will, leaving "to my fellowe, William Shakespeare, a thirty shillinges peece in goold." And in the following July, Shakespeare made the largest, and,
96 in a monetary sense very likely the most judicious, purchase he ever completed, giving the sum of £440 for the unexpired term of the moiety of a valuable lease of the tithes of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton and Welcombe.

On October the 9th in the same year, 1605, Shakespeare's company, having previously travelled as far as

Barnstaple, gave another performance before the Mayor and Corporation of Oxford. If the poet, as was most likely the case, was one of the actors on the occasion, he would have been lodging at the Crown Inn, a wine-tavern kept by one John Davenant, who had taken out his license in the previous year, 1604. The landlord was a highly respectable man, filling in succession the chief municipal offices, but, although of a peculiarly grave and saturnine disposition, he was, as recorded by Wood in 1692, "an admirer and lover of plays and play-makers, especially Shakespeare, who frequented his house in his journies between Warwickshire and London." His wife is described by the same writer as "a very beautiful woman, of a good wit and conversation." Early in the following year the latter presented her husband with a son, who was christened at St. Martin's Church on March the 3rd, 1606, receiving there the name of William. They had several other children, and their married life was one of such exceptional harmony that it elicited the unusual honour of metrical tributes. A more devoted pair the city of Oxford had never seen, and John Davenant, in his will, 1622, expressly desires that he should be "buryed in the parish of St. Martin's in Oxford as nere my wife as the place will give leave where shee lyeth."

It was the general belief in Oxford, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, that Shakespeare was William Davenant's godfather, and there is no reason for questioning the accuracy of the tradition. Anthony Wood alludes to the special regard in which the poet was held by the worthy innkeeper, while the christian name that was selected was a new one in the family of the latter. There was also current in the same town a

favourite anecdote, in which a person was warned not to speak of his godfather lest he should incur the risk of breaking the Third Commandment. This was a kind of representative story, one which could be told of any individual at the pleasure of the narrator, and it is found in the generic form in a collection of tavern pleasantries made by Taylor, the Water-Poet, in 1629. This last fact alone is sufficient to invest a personal application with the gravest doubt, and to lead to the inference that the subsequent version related of Shakespeare was altogether unauthorized. If so, there can be little doubt that with the spurious tale originated its necessary foundation, —the oft-repeated intimation that Sir William Davenant was the natural son of the great dramatist. The latter surmise is first heard of in one of the manuscripts of Aubrey, written in or before the year 1680, in which he says, after mentioning the Crown tavern,—"Mr. William Shakespeare was wont to goe into Warwickshire once a yeare, and did commonly in his journey lye at this house in Oxon, where he was exceedingly respected." He then proceeds to tell us that Sir William, considering himself equal in genius to Shakespeare, was not averse to being taken for his son, and would occasionally make these confessions in his drinking bouts with Sam Butler and other friends. The writer's language is obscure, and might have been thought to mean simply that Davenant wished to appear in the light of a son in the poetical
225 acceptation of the term, but the reckless gossip must needs add that Sir William's mother not only "had a very light report," but was looked upon in her own day as a perfect Thais. Sufficient is known of the family history of the Davenants, and of their social position and respectability, to enable us to be certain that this

onslaught upon the lady's reputation is a scandalous mis-statement. Anthony Wood also, the conscientious Oxonian biographer, who had the free use of Aubrey's 226
papers, eliminates every kind of insinuation against the character of either Shakespeare or Mrs. Davenant. He may have known from reliable sources that there could have been no truth in the alleged illegitimacy, and anyhow he no doubt had the independent sagacity to observe that the reception of the libel involved extravagant admissions. It would require us to believe that the guilty parties, with incredible callousness, united at the font to perpetuate their own recollection of the crime; and this in the presence of the injured husband, who must be presumed to have been then, and throughout his life, unconscious of a secret which was so insecurely kept that 227
it furnished ample materials for future slander. Even Aubrey himself tacitly concedes that the scandal had not transpired in the poet's time, for he mentions the great respect in which the latter was held at Oxford. Then, as if to make assurance to posterity doubly sure, there is preserved at Alnwick Castle a very elaborate manuscript poem on the Oxford gossip of the time of James the First, including especially everything that could be raked up against its innkeepers and taverns, and in that manuscript there is no mention either of the Crown Inn or of the Davenants.

It is, indeed, easy to perceive that we should never have heard any scandal respecting Mrs. Davenant, if she had not been noted in her own time, and for long afterwards, for her exceptional personal attractions. Her history ought to be a consolation to ugly girls, that is to say, if the existence of such rarities as the latter be not altogether mythical. Listen to the antique words of

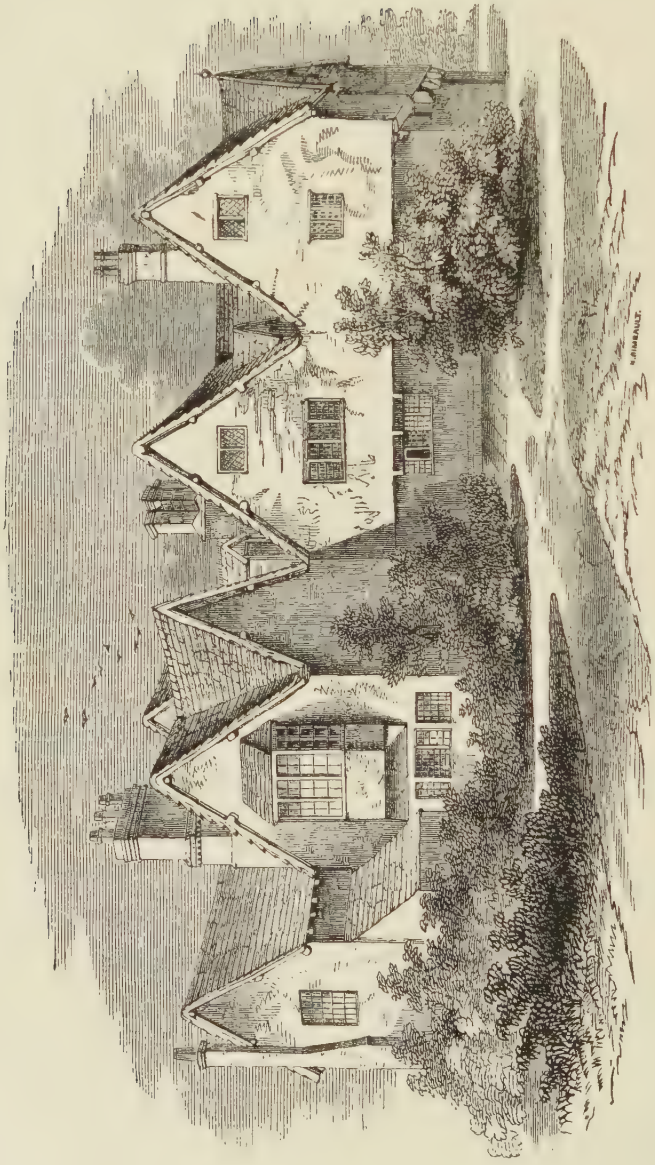
Flecknoe, 1654, referring to Lord Exeter's observation that the world spoke kindly of none but people of the ordinary types. "There is no great danger," he writes, even of the latter escaping censure, "calumny being so universal a trade now, as every one is of it; nor is there any action so good they cannot find a bad name for, nor entail upon't an ill intention; insomuch as one was so injurious to his mistress's beauty not long since to say,—she has more beauty than becomes the chaste."

The future Sir William was in his eleventh year when he lost his godfather, and the traditions which imply that he was fondly attached to him may be safely trusted. They are corroborated by much of Davenant's subsequent history. Amongst his earliest poems, those issued in 1638, there is an ode "in remembrance of Master William Shakespeare," in which he cautions writers to refrain from deriving their imagery from the banks of the Avon, the flowers and trees having withered in grief at his loss, while the river had nearly wept itself away. At a later period, curious as the assertion may now appear, he had the honour of teaching Dryden that there was something to admire in the works of the great dramatist. When, moreover, at the Restoration in 1660, Sir William was the first in attempting to revive the old drama in as legitimate a form as could then be tolerated, out of eleven of "the most ancient playes that were playd at Blackfriers" which he desired to re-introduce to the public, no fewer than nine were compositions of Shakespeare. In those days of a vicious stage, this course was one unlikely to have been adopted by a manager anxious, as Davenant unquestionably was, for commercial success, if he had not been influenced by strong personal tendencies, such as those which may have been cherished

from very early life in affectionate remembrance of the poet, or even derived from tastes primarily imbibed in association with him.

A considerable portion of this year, 1606, was spent by the King's Company in provincial travel. They were at Oxford in July, at Leicester in August, at Dover in September, and, at some unrecorded periods, at Maidstone, Saffron Walden, and Marlborough. Before the winter had set in they had returned to London, and in the Christmas holidays, on the evening of December the 26th, the tragedy of King Lear, some of the inci- 216
dents of which were adopted from one or more older 217
dramas on the same legend, was represented before King James at Whitehall, having no doubt been pro- 218
duced at the Globe in the summer of that year. No record of the character of its reception by the Court has been preserved, but it must have been successful at the theatre, for the booksellers, late in the November of the following year, made an arrangement with the company to enable them to obtain the sanction of the Master of the Revels for the publication of the tragedy, two editions of which shortly afterwards appeared, both dated in 1608. In these issues the author's name is curiously given in one line of large type at the very commencement of each title-page, a singular and even unique testimony to the popularity of a dramatic author of the period.

The poet's eldest daughter, Susanna, then in her twenty-fifth year, was married at Stratford-on-Avon on June the 5th, 1607, to John Hall, M.A., a physician who afterwards rose to great provincial eminence. He was born in the year 1575, and was most probably connected with the Halls of Acton, co. Middlesex, but he was not



THE BACK OF AN ELIZABETHAN HOUSE IN THE OLD TOWN, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON.

a native of that village. In his early days, as was usual 171
with the more highly educated youths of the time, he had travelled on the continent, and attained a proficiency in the French language. The period of his arrival at Stratford-on-Avon is unknown, but, from the absence of all notice of him in the local records previously to his marriage, it may be presumed that his settlement there had not then been of long duration. It might even have been the result of his engagement with the poet's daughter. He appears to have taken up his first Stratford abode in a road termed the Old Town, 172
a street leading from the churchyard to the main portion of the borough. With the further exceptions that, in 1611, his name is found in a list of supporters to a highway bill, and that, in 1612, he commenced leasing from the Corporation a small piece of wooded land on the outskirts of the town, nothing whatever is known of his career during the lifetime of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's company were playing at Oxford on September the 7th, 1607, and towards the close of the same year he lost his brother Edmund, who, on Thursday, December the 31st, was buried at Southwark, 234
in the church of St. Saviour's, "with a forenoone knell of the great bell." It may fairly be assumed that the burial in the church, a mark of respect which was seldom paid to an actor, and which added very considerably to the expenses of the funeral, resulted from the poet's own affectionate directions; while the selection of the morning for the ceremony, then unusual at St. Saviour's, may have arisen from a wish to give some of the members of the Globe company the opportunity of attendance. Edmund Shakespeare was in the twenty-eighth year of his age at the time of his death, and is

described in the register as a player. There can be little doubt that he was introduced to the stage by the great dramatist, but, from the absence of professional notice of him, it may be concluded that he did not attain to much theatrical eminence.

Elizabeth, the only child of the Halls, was born in February, 1608, an event which conferred on Shakespeare the dignity of grandfather. The poet lived to see her attain the engaging age of eight, and the fact of his entertaining a great affection for her does not require the support of probability derived from his traditionally recorded love of children. If he had not been extremely fond of the little girl, it is not likely that he would have specifically bequeathed so mere a child nearly the whole of his plate in addition to a valuable contingent interest in his pecuniary estate. It appears, from the records of some chancery proceedings, that she inherited in after life the shrewd business qualities of her grandfather, but, with this exception, nothing is known of her disposition or character.

211 In the spring of the year 1608, the apparently inartificial
212 drama of Pericles was represented at the Globe Theatre. It seems to have been well received, and Edward Blount, a London bookseller, lost no time in obtaining the personal sanction of Sir George Buck, the Master of the Revels, for its publication, but the emoluments derived from the stage performances were probably too large for the company to incur the risk of their being diminished by the circulation of the printed drama. Blount was perhaps either too friendly or too conscientious to persist in his designs against the wishes of the actors, and it was reserved for a less respectable publisher to issue
213 the first edition of Pericles early in the following year,

1609, an impression followed by another surreptitious one in 1611. As Blount, the legitimate owner of the copyright, was one of the proprietors of the first folio, it may safely be inferred that the editors of that work did not consider that the poet's share in the compo- 214
sition of Pericles was sufficiently large to entitle it to a place in their collection. This curious drama has, in fact, the appearance of being an earlier production, one to which, in its present form, Shakespeare was merely responsible for a number of re-castings and other improvements.

About the time that Pericles was so well received at the Globe, the tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra was in course of performance at the same theatre, but, although 78
successful, it did not equal the former in popularity. It 79
was, however, sufficiently attractive for Blount to secure the consent of the Master of the Revels to its publication, and also for the company to frustrate his immediate design.

Almost simultaneously with the contemplated publication of the admirable tragedy last mentioned, an insignificant piece, of some little merit but no dramatic power, entitled the Yorkshire Tragedy, was dishonestly introduced to the public as having been "written by W. Shakespeare." It was "printed by R. B. for Thomas Pavier" in 1608, the latter being a well-known unscrupulous publisher of the day, but it is of considerable interest as one of the few domestic tragedies of the kind and period that have descended to us, as well as from the circumstance of its having been performed by Shakespeare's company at the Globe Theatre. When originally produced, it appears to have had the title of All's One, belonging to a series of four diminutive plays 228

that were consecutively acted by the company as a single performance in lieu of a regular five-act drama. This was a curious practice of the early stage of which there are several other examples. The Yorkshire Tragedy, the only one of this Globe series now preserved, was founded on a real occurrence which happened in the spring of the year 1605,—one of those exceptionally terrible murders that every now and then electrify and sadden the public. A Yorkshire squire of good family, maddened by losses resulting from a career of dissipation, having killed two of his sons, unsuccessfully attempted the destruction of his wife and her then sole remaining child. The event created a great sensation in London at the time, and it is most likely that this drama on the subject was produced at the theatre shortly after the occurrence, or, at least, before the public excitement respecting it had subsided. This is probable, not merely from the haste with which it was apparently written, but from its somewhat abrupt termination indicating that it was completed before the execution of the murderer at York in August, 1605. It appears to have been the criminal's professed object to blot out the family in sight of their impending ruin, intending perhaps to consummate the work by suicide, but he exhibited at the last some kind of desire to atone for his unnatural cruelty. In order to save the remnant of the family estates for the benefit of his wife and surviving child, he refused to plead to the indictment, thus practically electing to suffer the then inevitable and fearful alternative of being pressed to death.

It is not unlikely that the publisher of the Yorkshire Tragedy took advantage of the departure of Shakespeare from London to perpetrate his nominated fraud, for the poet's company were travelling on the southern coast

about the time of its appearance. A few months later the great dramatist was destined to lose his mother, the Mary Arden of former days, who was buried at Stratford-on-Avon on September the 9th, 1608. He would naturally have desired, if possible, to attend the funeral, and it is nearly certain that he was at his native town in the following month. On October the 16th he was the principal godfather at the baptism of the William Walker to whom, in 1616, he bequeathed "twenty shillings in gold." This child was the son of Henry Walker, a mercer and one of the aldermen of the town. It should be added that the King's Servants were playing at Coventry on the twenty-ninth of the last-named month, and that they acted in the same year upon some unknown occasion at Marlborough.

The records of Stratford exhibit the poet, in 1608 and 1609, engaged in a suit with a townsman for the recovery of a debt. In the August of the former year he commenced an action against one John Addenbroke, but it then seems to have been in abeyance for a time, the first precept for a jury in the cause being dated December 21st, 1608; after which there was another delay, possibly in the hope of the matter being amicably arranged, a peremptory summons to the same jury having been issued on February 15th in the following year. A verdict was then given in favour of the poet for £6 and £1. 4*s*. costs, and execution went forth against the defendant; but the sergeant-at-mace returning that he was not to be found within the liberty of the borough, Shakespeare proceeded against a person of the name of Horneby, who had become bail for Addenbroke. This last process is dated on June the 7th, 1609, so that nearly a year elapsed during the prosecution of the suit. It

must not be assumed that the great dramatist attended personally to these matters, although of course the proceedings were carried on under his instructions. The precepts, as appears from memoranda in the originals, were issued by the poet's cousin, Thomas Greene, who
341 was then residing, under some unknown conditions, at New Place.

The spring of the year 1609 is remarkable in literary history for the appearance of one of the most singular volumes that ever issued from the press. It was entered at Stationers' Hall on May the 20th, and published by one Thomas Thorpe under the title of—"Shake-speares Sonnets, neuer before imprinted,"—the first two words being given in large capitals, so that they might attract their full share of public notice. This little book, a very small quarto of forty leaves, was sold at what would
138 now be considered the trifling price of five-pence. The exact manner in which these sonnets were acquired for publication remains a mystery, but it is most probable that they were obtained from one of the poet's intimate friends, who alone would be likely to have copies, not only of so many of those pieces but also one of the Lover's Complaint. However that may be, Thorpe,—the well-wishing *adventurer*,—was so elated with the opportunity of entering into the speculation that he
139 dedicated the work to the factor in the acquisition, one Mr. W. H., in language of hyperbolical gratitude, wishing him every happiness and an eternity, the latter in terms which are altogether inexplicable. The surname of the addressee, which has not been recorded, has been
140 the subject of numerous futile conjectures; but the use of initials in the place of names, especially if they referred to private individuals, was then so extremely common

that it is not necessary to assume that there was an intentional reservation.

At the time that the Sonnets issued from the press the author's company were itinerating in Kent, playing at Hythe on the sixteenth of May and at New Romney on the following day. They were also at Shrewsbury at some unrecorded period in the same year, a memorable one in the theatrical biography of the great dramatist, for, in the following December, the eyry of children quitted the Blackfriars Theatre to be replaced by Shakespeare's company. The latter then included Hemmings, Condell, Burbage, and the poet himself.

The exact period is unknown, but it was in the same year, 1609, or not very long afterwards, that Shakespeare 253
and two other individuals either commenced or devised a law-suit bearing upon a question in which he was interested as a partial owner of the Stratford tithes. Our only information on the subject is derived from the draft of a bill of complaint, one that was penned under the following circumstances.—Nearly all the valuable possessions of the local college, including the tithes of Stratford-on-Avon, Old Stratford, Welcombe and Bishopton, were granted by Edward the Sixth, a few days before his death in 1553, to the Corporation, but the gift was subject to the unexpired term of a lease for ninety-two years which had been executed in 1544 by the then proprietors in favour of one William Barker. The next owner of the lease, John Barker, assigned it in 1580 to Sir John Huband, but he reserved to himself a rent-charge of *£27. 13s. 4d.*, with the usual power of re-entry in case of non-payment. The above-mentioned tithes were of course involved in this liability, but, when Shakespeare purchased a moiety of them in 1605, it was arranged that

his share of that charge should be commuted by an annual payment of £5. An observance of this condition should have absolved the poet from further trouble in the matter, but this unfortunately was not the case. When the bill of complaint was drafted there were about forty persons who had interests under Barker's lease, and commutations of the shares of the rent-charge had only been made in two cases, that is to say, in those of the owners of the tithe-moieties. A number of the other tenants had expressed their willingness to join in an equitable arrangement, provided that it was legally carried out; but there were some who declined altogether to contribute, and hence arose the necessity of taking measures to compel them to do so, a few, including Shakespeare, having had to pay more than their due proportions to avoid the forfeitures of their several estates. The result of the legal proceedings, if any were instituted, is not known, but there are reasons for believing that the movement
254 terminated in some way in favour of the complainants.

The annual income which Shakespeare derived from his moiety is estimated in the bill of complaint at £60, but this was not only subject to the payment of the above-named £5, but also to that of one-half of another
255 rent-charge, one of £34, that belonged to the Corporation of Stratford. His nett income from the tithes would thus be reduced to £38, but it was necessarily of a fluctuating character, the probability, however, being
256 that there was a tendency towards increase, especially in the latter part of his career. It is most likely that he entered into an agreement each year with a collector, whose province it would have been to relieve him of all trouble in the matter, and pay over a stipulated amount. It is not probable that he him-

self visited the harvest field to mark, as was then the local practice, every tenth sheaf with a dock, or that he personally attended to the destination of each of his tithe-pigs.

The next year, 1610, is nearly barren of recorded incidents, but in the early part of it Shakespeare purchased twenty acres of pasture land from the Combes, adding them to the valuable freeholds that he had obtained from those parties in 1602. After this transaction he owned no fewer than a hundred and twenty-seven acres in the common fields of Stratford and its neighbourhood. His first purchase consisted entirely of arable land, but although he had the usual privilege of common of pasture that was attached to it, the new acquisition was no doubt a desirable one. The concord of the fine that was prepared on the latter occasion is dated April the 13th, 1610, and, as it was acknowledged before Commissioners, it may be inferred that Shakespeare was not in London at the time. His company were at Dover in July, at Oxford in August, and at Shrewsbury at some period of the year which has not been recorded.

There are an unusual number of evidences of Shakespeare's dramatic popularity in the following year. We now first hear of his plays of Macbeth, the Winter's Tale, Cymbeline, and the Tempest. New impressions of Titus Andronicus, Hamlet and Pericles also appeared in 1611, and, in the same year, a publisher named Helme issued an edition of the old play of King John, that which Shakespeare so marvellously re-dramatized, with the deceptive imputation of the authorship to one W. Sh., a clear proof, if any were needed, of the early commercial value of his name.

14 The tragedy of Macbeth was acted at the Globe
15 Theatre, in April, 1611, and Forman, the celebrated
16 astrologer, has recorded a graphic account of its performance on that occasion, the only contemporary notice of it that has been discovered. The eccentric Doctor appears to have given some of the details inaccurately, but he could hardly have been mistaken in the statement that Macbeth and Banquo made their first appearance on
17 horseback, a curious testimony to the rude endeavours of the stage-managers of the day to invest their representations with something of reality. The weird sisters were personated by men whose heads were disguised by grotesque periwigs. Forman's narrative decides a question, which has frequently been raised, as to whether the Ghost of Banquo should appear, or only be imagined, by Macbeth. There is no doubt that the Ghost was personally introduced on the early stage as well as long afterwards, when the tragedy was revived by Davenant; but the audiences of the seventeenth century were indoctrinated with the common belief that spirits were generally visible only to those connected with their object or mission, so in this play, as in some others of the period, an artificial stimulus to credulity in that direction was unnecessary. It is a singular circumstance that, in Davenant's time, Banquo and his Ghost were performed by different actors, a practice not impossibly derived from that of former times.

122 A performance of the comedy of the Winter's Tale, the name of which is probably owing to its having been originally produced in the winter season, was witnessed by Dr. Forman at the Globe Theatre on May the 15th, 1611. It was also the play chosen for representation before the Court on the fifth of November in the same

year. Although it is extremely unlikely that Camillo's speech respecting "anointed Kings" influenced the selection of the comedy, there can hardly be a doubt that a sentiment so appropriate to the anniversary celebrated on that day was favourably received by a Whitehall audience. The Winter's Tale was also performed in the year 1613 before Prince Charles, the Lady Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine, some time before the close of the month of April, at which period the two last of the above-named personages left England for the Continent.

Amongst the performances of other dramas witnessed by Dr. Forman was one of the tragedy of Cymbeline, 18
and although he does not record either the date or the locality, there can be little hesitation in referring the incident to the spring of the year 1611; at all events, to a period not later than the following September, when that marvellously eccentric astrologer died suddenly in a 19
boat while passing over the Thames from Southwark to Puddle Dock. It may be suspected that the poet was in London at the time of that occurrence, for in a subscription-list originated at Stratford-on-Avon on the eleventh of that month, his name is the only one found on the margin, as if it were a later insertion in a folio page of donors "towardes the charge of prosecutyng the bill in Parliament for the better repayre of the highe waies." The moneys were raised in anticipation of a Parliament which was then expected to be summoned, but which did not meet until long afterwards. The list includes the names of all the leading inhabitants of the town, so that it is impossible to say whether the poet took a special interest in the proposed design, or if he allowed his name to appear merely out of consideration for its promoters.

The comedy of the Tempest, having most likely been produced at one of the Shakespearean theatres in 1611,
152 was represented before King James and the Court at
153 Whitehall on the evening of the First of November in that year, the incidental music having been composed by Robert Johnson, one of the Royal "musicians for the lutes." The record of the performance includes the earliest notice of that drama which has yet been dis-
154 covered. It was also acted with success at the Blackfriars Theatre, and it was one of the plays selected early in
155 the year 1613 for the entertainment of Prince Charles, the Lady Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine.

The four years and a half that intervened between the performance of the Tempest in 1611 and the author's death, could not have been one of his periods of great literary activity. So many of his plays are known to have been in existence at the former date, it follows that
11 there are only six which could by any possibility have been written after that time, and it is not likely that the whole of those belong to so late an era. These facts lead irresistibly to the conclusion that the poet abandoned literary occupation a considerable period before his decease, and, in all probability, when he disposed of his theatrical property. So long as he continued to be a shareholder in the Globe Theatre, it was incumbent upon him to supply the company with two plays annually. It may, therefore, be reasonably inferred that he parted with his shares within two or three years after the performance above alluded to, the drama of Henry the Eighth being, most likely, his concluding work.

Amongst the six plays above-mentioned is the amusing comedy of the Taming of the Shrew. Most of the incidents of that drama, as well as those of its

exquisite Induction, are taken from an old farce which 63
was written at some time before May, 1594, and 64
published in that year under the nearly identical title
of the Taming of a Shrew. This latter work had then
been acted by the Earl of Pembroke's servants, and
was probably well known to Shakespeare when he was
connected with that company, or shortly afterwards, for
it was one of the plays represented at the Newington
Butts Theatre by the Lord Admiral's and the Lord
Chamberlain's men in the June of the same year. The
period at which he wrote the new comedy is at present
a matter solely of conjecture; but its local allusions might 65
induce an opinion that it was composed with a view to a
contemplated representation before a provincial audience.
That delicious episode, the Induction, presents us with a
fragment of the rural life with which Shakespeare him-
self must have been familiar in his native county. With
such animated power is it written that we almost appear
to personally witness the affray between Marian Hacket,
the fat ale-wife of Wincot, and Christopher Sly, to see 110
the nobleman on his return from the chase discovering
the insensible drunkard, and to hear the strolling actors
make the offer of professional services that was requited
by the cordial welcome to the buttery. Wincot is a 150
secluded hamlet near Stratford-on-Avon, and there is an
old tradition that the ale-house frequented by Sly was
often resorted to by Shakespeare for the sake of diverting
himself with a fool who belonged to a neighbouring mill. 151
Stephen Sly, one of the tinker's friends or relatives, was
a known character at Stratford-on-Avon, and is several
times mentioned in the records of that town. This fact,
taken in conjunction with the references to Wilmecote and
Barton-on-the-Heath, definitely proves that the scene of

the Induction was intended to be in the neighbourhood of Stratford-on-Avon, the water-mill tradition leading to the belief that Little Wilmecote, the part of the hamlet nearest to the poet's native town, is the Wincot alluded to in the comedy. If—but the virtuous character of that interesting particle must not be overlooked—the local imagery extends to the nobleman, the play itself must be supposed to be represented at Clopton House, the only large private residence near the scene of Sly's intemperance; but if so, not until 1605, in the May of which year Sir George became Baron Carew of Clopton.

It was the general opinion in the convivial days of Shakespeare "that a quart of ale is a dish for a king." So impressed were nearly all classes of society by its attractions, it was imbibed wherever it was to be found, and there was no possible idea of degradation attached to the poet's occasional visits to the house of entertainment at Wincot. If, indeed, he had been observed in that village, and to pass Mrs. Hacket's door without taking a sip of ale with the vigorous landlady, he might perhaps no longer have been enrolled amongst the members of good-fellowship. Such a notion, at all events, is at variance with the proclivities recorded in the famous crab-tree anecdote, one which is of sufficient antiquity to deserve a notice amongst the more trivial records of Shakespearean biography. It would appear from this tradition that the poet, one summer's morning, set out from his native town for a walk over
184 Bardon Hill to the village of Bidford, six miles distant,
185 a place said to have been then noted for its revelry. When he had nearly reached his destination, he hap-
186 pened to meet with a shepherd, and jocosely enquired of him if the Bidford Drinkers were at home. The rustic,

THE BACK OF CLOPTON HOUSE, NEAR STRATFORD-ON-AVON, AS IT APPEARED IN THE YEAR 1801.

perfectly equal to the occasion, replied that the Drinkers
187 were absent, but that he would easily find the Sippers,
188 and that the latter might perhaps be sufficiently jolly to meet his expectations. The anticipations of the shepherd were fully realized, and Shakespeare, in bending his way homeward late in the evening, found an acceptable interval of rest under the branches of a
189 crab-tree which was situated about a mile from Bidford. There is no great wonder and no special offence to record, when it is added that he was overtaken by drowsiness, and that he did not renew the course of
190 his journey until early in the following morning. The whole story, indeed, when viewed strictly with reference to the habits and opinions of those days, presents no features that suggest disgrace to the principal actor, or imposition on the part of the narrator. With our ancestors the ludicrous aspect of intoxication completely neutralized, or rather, to speak more correctly, excluded the thought of attendant discredit. The affair would have been merely regarded in the light of an unusually good joke, and that there is, at least, some foundation for the tale may be gathered from the fact that, as early as the year 1762, the tree, then known as Shakespeare's Canopy, was regarded at Stratford-on-Avon as an object of great interest.

In the year 1612 the third edition of the Passionate Pilgrim made its appearance, the publisher seeking to attract a special class of buyers by describing it as consisting of "Certain Amorous Sonnets between Venus and Adonis." These were announced as the work of Shakespeare, but it is also stated that to them were "newly added two love-epistles, the first from Paris to Helen, and Helen's answer back again to Paris;" the

name of the author of the last two poems not being mentioned. The wording of the title might imply that the latter were also the compositions of the great dramatist, but they were in fact written by Thomas Heywood, and had been impudently taken from his Troia Britanica, a large poetical work that had appeared three years previously, 1609. "Here, likewise," observes that writer, speaking in 1612 of the last-named production, "I must necessarily insert a manifest injury done me in that worke by taking the two Epistles of Paris to Helen, and Helen to Paris, and printing them in a lesse volume under the name of another, which may put the world in opinion I might steale them from him; and hee, to doe himselfe right, hath since published them in his owne name; but as I must acknowledge my lines not worthy his patronage under whom he hath publisht them, so the author I know much offended with M. Jaggard 111
that (altogether unknowne to him) presumed to make so bold with his name."

Although Heywood thus ingeniously endeavours to make it appear that his chief objection to the piracy arose from a desire to shield himself against a charge of plagiarism, it is apparent that he was highly incensed at the liberty that had been taken; and a new title-page to the Passionate Pilgrim of 1612, from which Shakespeare's name was withdrawn, was afterwards issued. There can be little doubt that this step was taken mainly in consequence of the remonstrances of Heywood addressed to Shakespeare, who may certainly have been displeased at Jaggard's proceedings, but as clearly required pressure to induce him to act in the matter. If the publisher would now so readily listen to Shakespeare's wishes, it is difficult to believe that he would not

have been equally compliant had he been expostulated with either at the first appearance of the work in 1599, or at any period during the following twelve years of its circulation. It is pleasing to notice that Heywood, in observing that the poet was ignorant of Jaggard's intentions, entirely acquits the former of any blame in the matter.

In the course of this year the King's Servants are found playing at Folkestone, New Romney, and Shrewsbury; and early in the following one, 1613, the great dramatist lost his younger, most probably now his only surviving, brother, Richard, who was buried at Stratford-on-Avon on Thursday, the fourth of February. He was in the thirty-ninth year of his age. Beyond the records of his baptism and funeral no biographical particulars respecting him have been discovered; but it may be suspected that all the poet's brothers were at times more or less dependent on his purse or influence. When the parish-clerk told Dowdall, in 1693, that Shakespeare "was the best of his family," he used a provincial expression which implied not only that its other members of the same sex were less amiable than himself, but that they were not held in very favourable estimation.

There is no record of the exact period at which the great dramatist retired from the stage in favour of a retreat at New Place, but it is not likely that he made the latter a permanent residence until 1613 at the earliest. Had this step been taken previously, it is improbable that he would, in the March of that year, have been anxious to secure possession of an estate in London, a property consisting of a house and a yard, the lower part of the former having been then

and for long previously a haberdasher's shop. The premises referred to, situated within one or two hundred yards to the east of the Blackfriars Theatre, were bought by the poet for the sum of £140, and, for some reason or other, he was so intent on its acquisition that he permitted a considerable amount, £60, of the purchase-money to remain on mortgage. That reason can hardly be found in the notion that the property was merely a desirable investment, for it would appear to have been purchased at a somewhat extravagant rate, the vendor, one Henry Walker, a London 244
musician, having paid but £100 for it in the year 1604. If intended for conversion into Shakespeare's own residence, that design was afterwards abandoned, for, at some time previously to his death, he had granted a lease of it to John Robinson, who was, oddly enough, one of the persons who had violently opposed the establishment of the neighbouring theatre. It does not appear that Shakespeare lived to redeem the mortgage, for the legal estate remained in the trustees 245
until the year 1618. Amongst the latter was one described as John Hemyng of London, gentleman, who signs himself Heminges, but it is not likely that he was the poet's friend and colleague of the same name. 246

The conveyance-deeds of this house bear the date of March the 10th, 1613, but in all probability they were not executed until the following day, and at the same time that the mortgage was effected. The latter transaction was completed in Shakespeare's presence on the eleventh, and that the occurrence took place in London or in the immediate neighbourhood is apparent from the fact that the vendor deposited the original conveyance on the same day for enrollment in the Court of 24

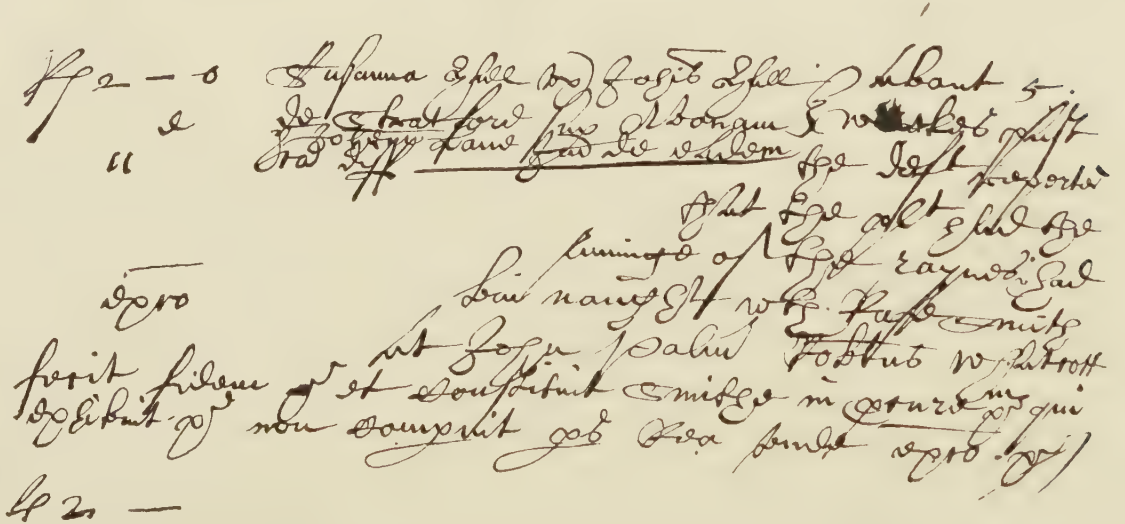
Chancery. The independent witnesses present on the occasion consisted of Atkinson, who was the Clerk of the Brewers' Company, and a person of the name of Overy. To these were joined the then usual official attestors, the scrivener who drew up the deeds and his assistant, the latter, one Henry Lawrence, having the honour of lending his seal to the great dramatist, who thus, to the disappointment of posterity, impressed the wax of both his labels with the initials H. L. instead of those of his own name.

This Blackfriars estate was the only London property that Shakespeare is known for certain to have ever owned. It consisted of a dwelling-house, the first story of which was erected partially over a gateway, and either at the side or back, included in the premises, was a diminutive enclosed plot of land. The house was situated on the west side of St. Andrew's Hill, formerly otherwise termed Puddle Hill or Puddle Dock Hill, and it was either partially on or very near the
248 locality now and for more than two centuries known
249 as Ireland Yard. At the bottom of the hill was Puddle Dock, a narrow creek of the Thames which may yet be traced, with its repulsive very gradually inclined surface of mud at low water, and, at high, an admirable representative of its name. Stow, in his Survay of London, ed. 1603, p. 41, mentions "a water gate at Puddle Wharfe, of one Puddle that kept a wharfe on the west side thereof, and now of puddle water, by meanes of many horses watred there." It is scarcely necessary to observe that every vestige of the Shakespearean house was obliterated in the great fire of 1666. So complete was the destruction of all this quarter of London that, perhaps, the only fragment of its ancient

buildings that remained to the present century is a doorway of the old church or priory of the Blackfriars, a relic which was to be observed about twenty years since, then built into the outer wall of a parish lumber-house adjoining St. Anne's burying ground.

The Globe Theatre was destroyed by fire on Tuesday, June the 29th, 1613. The great dramatist was probably at Stratford-on-Avon at the time of this lamentable occurrence. At all events, his name is not mentioned in any of the notices of the calamity, nor is there a probability 97
that he was the author of the new drama on the history 98
of Henry the Eighth, which was then produced, the first one on the public stage in which the efforts of the dramatist were subordinated to theatrical display. It is true that some of the historical incidents in the piece 99
that was in course of representation when the accident occurred are also introduced into Shakespeare's play, but it is not likely that there was any other resemblance 100
between the two works. Amongst the actors engaged at the theatre on this fatal day were Burbage, Hemmings, Condell, and one who enacted the part of the Fool, the two last being so dilatory in quitting the building 101
that fears were entertained for their safety. Up to this period, therefore, it may reasonably be inferred that the stage-fool had been introduced into every play on the subject of Henry the Eighth, so that when Shakespeare's pageant-drama appeared some time afterwards, the Prologue is careful to inform the audience that there 102
was to be a novel treatment of the history divested of some of the former accompaniments. This theory of a late date is in consonance with the internal evidence. 103
The temperate introduction of lines with the hypermetrical syllable has often a pleasing effect, but during

Facsimile of an Entry made in the year 1613 by the Registrar of the Ecclesiastical Court of Worcester, being one of the minutes in an action for slander brought by Shakespeare's eldest daughter, Susanna Hall, against a person of the name of Lane.—"Susanna Hall, uxor Johannis Hall de Stratford-super-Avonam, contra Johannem Lane, juniorem, de eadem; causa diffamationis."



the last few years of the poet's career, their immoderate use was affected by our dramatists, and although, for the most part, Shakespeare's metre was a free offspring of 258
the ear, owing little but its generic form to his predecessors and contemporaries, it appears certain that, in the present instance, he suffered himself to be over-ruled 104
by this disagreeable innovation.

When Shakespeare's Henry the Eighth was produced, the character of the King was undertaken by Lowin, a very accomplished actor. This fact, which is stated on the authority of an old manuscript note in a copy of the second folio preserved at Windsor Castle, is confirmed by Downes, in 1708, and by Roberts, the actor, in a tract published in 1729, the latter observing,—"I am apt to think, he (Lowin) did not rise to his perfection and most exalted state in the theatre till after Burbage, tho' he play'd what we call second and third characters in his time, and particularly Henry the Eighth originally; from an observation of whose acting it in his later days Sir William Davenant convey'd his instructions to Mr. Betterton." According to Downes, Betterton was instructed in the acting of the part by Davenant, "who had it from old Mr. Lowin, that had his in- 105
structions from Mr. Shakespeare himself." There is a stage-tradition that, in Shakespeare's drama, as was also probably the case in all the old plays on the subject, the King's exclamation of *ha* was peculiarly emphasized. A story is told by Fuller of a boy-actor in the part whose 106
feeble utterance of this particle occasioned a colleague to warn him that, if he did not pronounce it more vigorously, his Parliament would never give him "a penny of money."

Shortly before the destruction of the Globe Theatre in 1613, and in the same month of June, there was a

malicious bit of gossip in circulation at Stratford-on-Avon respecting Mrs. Hall, Shakespeare's eldest daughter, and one Ralph Smith. The rumour was traced to an
386 individual of the name of Lane, who was accordingly summoned to the Ecclesiastical Court to atone for the offence. The case was opened at Worcester on July the 15th, 1613, the poet's friend, Robert Whatcot, being the chief witness on behalf of the plaintiff. Nothing beyond the formal proceedings in the suit has been recorded, but there can be little doubt that Lane was one of those mean social basilisks who attack the personal honour of any one whom they may happen to be offended with. Slanderers, however, are notorious cowards. Neither the defendant nor his proctor ventured to appear before the court, and, in the end, the lady's character was vindicated by the excommunication of the former on July the 27th.

When itinerant preachers visited Stratford-on-Avon it was the fashion in those days for the Corporation to make them complimentary offerings. In the spring of the following year, 1614, one of these gentlemen arrived in the town, and being either quartered at New Place, or spending a few hours in that house, was there presented by the municipal authorities with one quart of sack and another of claret. There is no evidence that Shakespeare participated in the clerical festivity, the earliest notice of him in this year being in July, when John Combe, one of the leading inhabitants, died bequeathing him the then handsome legacy of £5. It is clear, therefore, that, at the time the will was made, there was no unfriendliness between the two parties, and that the lines commencing, Ten-in-the-hundred, if genuine, must have been composed at

Midland Common Fields, the shaded portions consisting of grass and the unshaded of arable, from a sketch taken by Blight in 1864 of one of the few then remaining examples. In Shakespeare's time a very large proportion of English land was cultivated under this system.

a later period. The first two lines of that mock elegy are, however, undoubtedly spurious, and are omitted in the earliest discovered version of it, dated 1630, preserved at Thirlestane House. There is, moreover, no reason for believing that Combe was an usurious money-lender, ten per cent. being then the legal and ordinary rate of interest. That rate was not lowered until after the death of Shakespeare.

The Globe Theatre, which had been rebuilt at a very large cost, had then been recently opened; and Chamberlain, writing from London on June the 30th, 1614, to a lady at Venice, says, "I heare much speach of this new playhouse, which is saide to be the fayrest that ever was in England."

In the autumn of the same year, 1614, there was great excitement at Stratford-on-Avon respecting an attempted enclosure of a large portion of the neighbouring common-fields,—not commons, as so many biographers have inadvertently stated. The design was resisted by the Corporation, under the natural impression that, if it were realized, both the number of agricultural employés and the value of the tithes would be seriously diminished. There is no doubt that this would have been the case, and, as might have been expected, William Combe, the squire of Welcombe, who originated the movement, encountered a determined and, in the end, a successful opposition. He spared, however, no exertions to accomplish the object, and, in many instances, if we may believe contemporary allegations, tormented the poor and coaxed the rich into an acquiescence with his views. It appears most probable that Shakespeare was one of the latter who were so influenced, and that, amongst perhaps other inducements, he was

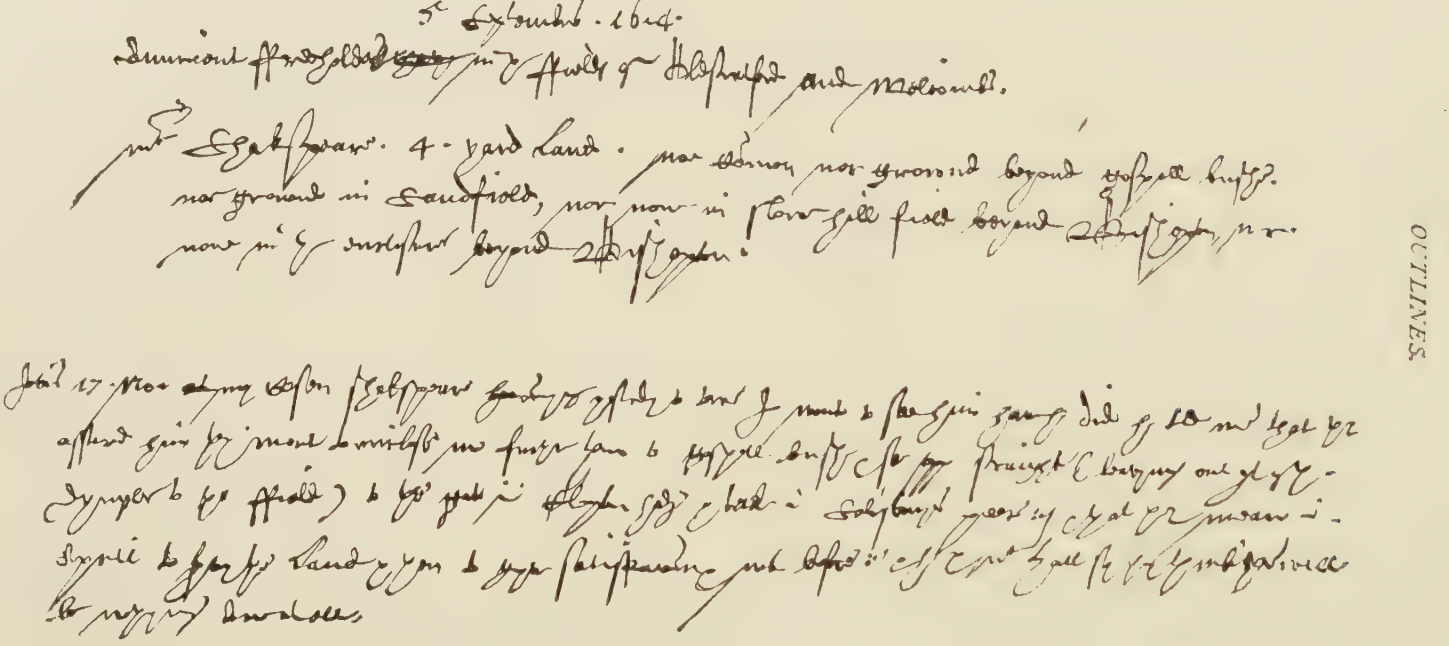
allured to the unpopular side by Combe's agent, one Replingham, guaranteeing him from prospective loss. However that may be, it is certain that the poet was in favour of the enclosures, for, on December the 23rd, the Corporation addressed a letter of remonstrance to him on the subject, and another on the same day to a Mr. Manwaring. The latter, who had been practically bribed by some land arrangements at Welcombe, undertook to protect the interests of Shakespeare, so there can be no doubt that the three parties were acting in unison.

It appears that Shakespeare was in the metropolis when the Corporation decided upon the expostulary letter of the 23rd of December, 1614, and that he had arrived there on Wednesday, November the 16th, almost certainly, in those days of arduous travel, spending the entire interval in London. We are indebted for the knowledge of the former circumstances to the diary of Thomas Greene, the town-clerk of Stratford-on-Avon, who has recorded in that manuscript the following too brief, but still extremely curious, notices of the great dramatist in connection with the subject of the enclosures :—

a.—Jovis, 17 Nov., my cosen Shakspeare comyng yesterday to towne, I went to see him how he did. He told me that they assured him they ment to inclose noe further then to Gospell Bushe, and soe upp straight (leavyng out part of the Dyngles to the Field) to the Gate in Clopton hedge, and take in Salisburyes peece ; and that they mean in Aprill to survey the land, and then to gyve satisfaccion, and not before ; and he and Mr. Hall say they think ther will be nothyng done at all.

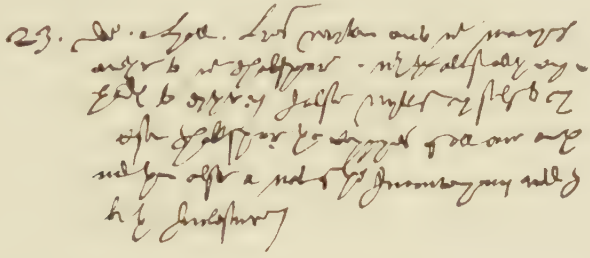
b.—23 Dec. A hall. Lettres wryten, on to Mr. Maneryng, another to Mr. Shakspeare, with almost all the companies handes to eyther. I alsoe wrytte of myself to my cosen Shakspear the coppyes of all our actes, and then also a not of the inconvenyences wold happen by the inclosure.

c.—9 Jan. 1614. Mr. Replyngham, 28 Octobris, article with Mr. Shakspear, and then I was putt in by T. Lucas.



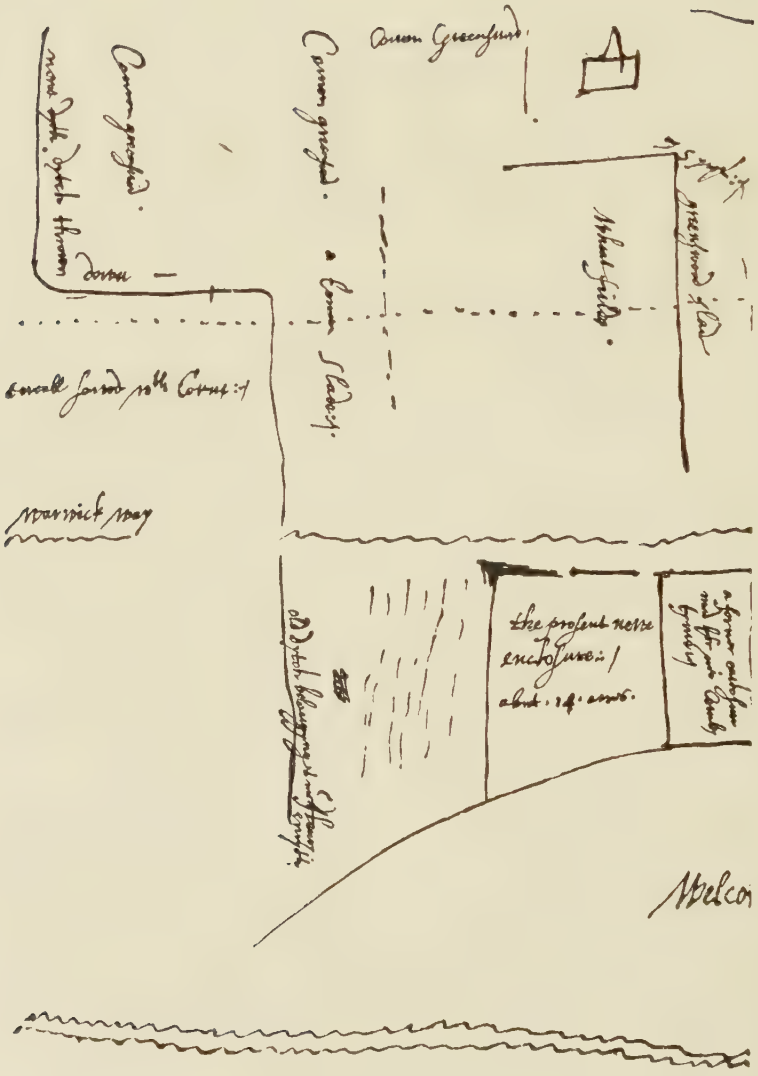
d.—11 Januarii, 1614. Mr. Manyryng and his agreement for me with my cosen Shakspeare.

e.—Sept. Mr. Shakspeare tellyng J. Greene that I was not able 388
to beare the encloseing of Welcombe.



Greene was in London at the date of the first entry, and at Stratford at that of the second. The exact day on which the fifth memorandum was written is not given, but it was certainly penned before the fifth of September. Why the last observation should have been chronicled at all is a mystery, but the note has a mournful interest as the register of the latest recorded spoken words of the great dramatist. They were uttered in the autumn of the year 1615, when the end was very near at hand.

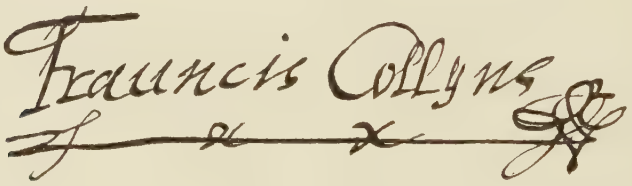
Had it not been for its untimely termination, the concluding period of Shakespeare's life would have been regarded with unmixed pleasure. It "was spent," observes Rowe, "as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and conversation of his friends." The latter were not restricted to his provincial associates, for he retained his literary intimacies until the end; while it is clear, from what is above recorded, that his retirement to Stratford did not exclude an occasional visit to the metropolis. He had, moreover, the practical wisdom to be contented with the fortune his incessant labours had secured. He had gathered, writes his first real biographer, "an estate equal to his occasion,


Common Greenfield
Common greenfield
Common greenfield
Warwick Way
the present new enclosure
Welco

Berwick-way.
Common ground
mbe medowe

and, in that, *to his wish*," language which suggests a traditional belief that the days of accumulation had passed. In other words, he was one of the few who knew when to commence the enjoyment of acquired wealth, avoiding the too common error of desiring more when in full possession of whatever there is in the ability of money to contribute to happiness.

It is not likely that the poet, with his systematic forethought, had hitherto neglected to provide for the ultimate devolution of his estates, but, as usual, it is only the latest will that has been preserved. This important record was prepared in January, 1616, either by or under
371 the directions of Francis Collins, a solicitor then residing



372 at Warwick, and it appears, from the date given to the superscription and from some of the erasures in the
373 manuscript itself, that it was a corrected draft ready for an engrossment that was to have been signed by the testator on Thursday, the twenty-fifth of that month. For some unknown reason, but most probably owing to circumstances relating to Judith's matrimonial engage-
374 ment, the appointment for that day was postponed, at Shakespeare's request, in anticipation of further instructions, and before Collins had ordered a fair copy to be made. The draft, therefore, remained in his custody,
375 his client being then "in perfect health," and taking no doubt a lively interest in all that concerned his daughter's

marriage. Under such conditions a few weeks easily pass away unheeded, so that, when he was unexpectedly seized with a dangerous fever in March, it is not very surprising that the business of the will should be found to have been neglected. Hence it was that his lawyer was hurriedly summoned from Warwick, that it was not considered advisable to wait for the preparation of a regular transcript, and that the papers were signed after a few more alterations had been hastily effected. An unusual number of witnesses were called in to secure the validity of the informally written document, its draftsman, 376
according to the almost invariable custom at that time, being the first to sign.

The corrected draft of the will was so hastily revised at Shakespeare's bedside, that even the alteration of the day of the month was overlooked. It is probable that 377
the melancholy gathering at New Place happened somewhat later than the twenty-fifth of March, the fourth week after a serious attack of fever being generally the most fatal period. We may at all events safely assume that, if death resulted from such a cause on April the 23rd, the seizure could not have occurred much before the end of the preceding month. It is satisfactory to know that the invalid's mind was as yet unclouded, several of the interlineations that were added on the occasion having obviously emanated from himself. And it is not necessary to follow the general opinion that the signatures betray the tremulous hand of illness, although portions of them may indicate that they were written from an inconvenient position. It may be observed that the words, *by me*, which, the autographs excepted, are the only ones in the poet's handwriting known to exist, appear to have been penned with ordinary firmness.

The first interlineation, that which refers to Judith, was apparently the result of her marriage, an event considered as a probability on the twenty-fifth of January, and shortly afterwards, that is to say, in less than three weeks, definitively arranged. That the poet, as is so

often assumed, was ignorant, in January, of an attachment which resulted in a marriage in February, is altogether incredible. It is especially so when it is recollected that the Quiney and Shakespeare families were at least on visiting terms, and all residing in a small country town, where the rudiment of every love-affair must have been immediately enrolled amongst the desirable ingredients of the gossips' caldron. But there is evidence in the will itself that Shakespeare not only contemplated Judith's marriage, but was extremely anxious for her husband to settle on her an estate in land equivalent in value to the bequest of £150. He makes the failure of that settlement an absolute bar to the husband's life or other personal interest in the money, rigidly securing the integrity of the capital against the possibility of the condition being evaded so long as Judith or any of her issue were living. The singular limitation of the three years from the date of the will,
378 not from that of the testator's decease, may perhaps be explained by the possibility of Thomas Quiney having a landed reversion accruing to him at the end of that period, such as a bequest contingent on his reaching the age of thirty. However that may be, it seems

certain that the interlineated words, *in discharge of her marriage portion*, must have reference to an engagement on the part of Shakespeare, one entered into after the will was first drawn up and before that paragraph was inserted, to give Judith the sum of £100 on the occasion of her marriage with Thomas Quiney. That event took place in their native town on Saturday, February the 10th, 1616. There was some reason for accelerating the nuptials, for they were married without a license, an irregularity for which, a few weeks afterwards, they were fined and threatened with excommunication by the ecclesiastical court at Worcester. No evidence, however, has been discovered to warrant the frequent suggestion that the poet disapproved of the alliance. So far as is known, there was nothing in the bridegroom's position or then character to authorise a parent's opposition, nor have good reasons been adduced for the suspicion that there was ever any unpleasantness between the married Quineys and their Shakespeare connections. Their first-born son was christened after the great dramatist, and they remained on good terms with the 141
Halls. Judith, the first and one of the most prominent legatees named in the will, was a tenant-for-life in remainder under the provisions of that document, so there is not the least reason for suspecting that the partiality therein exhibited to the testator's eldest daughter was otherwise than one elicited by aristocratic tendencies. It is not likely that it was viewed in any other light by the younger sister, who received what were for those days exceedingly liberal pecuniary legacies, while the special gift to her of "my broad silver gilt bole" is an unmistakable testimony of affection. Shakespeare, in devising his real estates

Ung durus et cruy qui pour deu ende sage
qui pour le mal dautry sont soy apparti
cage

to one child, followed the example of his maternal grandfather and the general custom of landed proprietors. He evidently desired that their undivided ownership should continue in the family, but that he had no other motive may be inferred from the absence of conditions for the perpetuation of his own name.

Thomas Quiney, at the time of his marriage with Judith Shakespeare, was very nearly four years her junior, having been a younger son, born in 1589, of Richard Quiney, whose correspondence with the poet in 1598 has already been noticed. He then, that is to say, in February, 1616, lived in a small house on the west of the High Street, but nothing respecting his previous career has been discovered. That his education, however, had not been restricted to the curriculum of the Grammar School, and that he had been specially instructed in French and caligraphy, may be inferred from the motto in that language and from the elaborate signatures with which he has embellished the first page of the account that he delivered to the Corporation in the year 1623.

Following the bequests to the Quineys are those to the poet's sister Joan, then in her forty-seventh year, and five pounds a-piece to his nephews, her three children, lads of the respective ages of sixteen, eleven, and eight. To this lady, who became a widow very shortly before his own decease, he leaves, besides a contingent reversionary interest, his wearing apparel, twenty pounds in money, and a life-interest in the Henley Street property, the last being subject to the manorial rent of twelve-pence. This limitation of real estate to Mrs. Hart, the anxiety displayed to secure the integrity of the little Rowington copyhold, and

the subsequent devises to his eldest daughter, exhibit very clearly his determination to place under legal settlement every foot of land that he possessed. With this object in view, he settles his estates in tail male, with the usual remainders over, all of which, however, so far as the predominant intention was concerned, turned out to be merely exponents of the vanity of human wishes. Before half a century had elapsed, all possibility of the continuance of the family entail had been dispelled.

The most celebrated interlineation is that in which Shakespeare leaves his widow his "second-best bed with the furniture," the first-best being that generally reserved for visitors, and one which may possibly have descended as a family heir-loom, becoming in that
379 way the undevisable property of his eldest daughter. Bedsteads were sometimes of elaborate workmanship, and gifts of them are often to be met with in ancient wills. The notion of indifference to his wife, so frequently deduced from the above-mentioned entry, cannot be sustained on that account. So far from being considered of trifling import, beds were even sometimes
380 selected as portions of compensation for dower; and bequests of personal articles of the most insignificant description were never formerly held in any light but that of marks of affection. Amongst the smaller legacies of former days may be enumerated kettles, chairs, gowns, hats, pewter cups, feather bolsters, and cullenders. In the year 1642 one John Shakespeare of Budbrook, near Warwick, considered it a sufficient mark of respect to his father-in-law to leave him "his best boots."

The expression *second-best* has, however, been so repeatedly and so seriously canvassed to the testator's

prejudice, it is important to produce evidence of its strictly inoffensive character. Such evidence is to be found in instances of its testamentary use in cases where an approach to a disparaging significance could not have been entertained. Thus the younger Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, in a will made in the year 1600, bequeathed to his son Richard "my second-best horse and furnyture"; and amongst the legacies given by Bartholomew Hathaway to his son Edmund, in 1621, is "my second brass pott." But there is another example that is conclusive in itself, without other testimony, of the position which is here advocated. It is in the will, dated in April, 1610, of one John Harris, a well-to-do notary of Lincoln, who, while leaving his wife a freehold estate and other property, also bequeaths to her "the standing bedstead in the litle chaumber, *with the second-best featherbed I have, with a whole furniture therto belonging*, and allso a trundle-bedsted with a featherbed, and the furniture therto belonging, and six payer of sheetes, three payer of the better sorte and three payer of the meaner sorte." This extremely interesting parallel disposes of the most plausible reason that has ever been given for the notion that there was at one time some kind of estrangement between Shakespeare and his Anne. Let us be permitted to add that the opportunity which has thus presented itself of refuting such an aspersion is more than satisfactory,—it is a consolation; for there are few surer tests of the want either of a man's real amiability or of his moral conduct than his incompetence, excepting in very special cases, to remain on affectionate terms with the partner of his choice. And it is altogether impossible that there could have been an exculpatory special case in the present instance. Ubera tu, mater, &c.

The conjugal history of Shakespeare would not have been so tarnished had more regard been given to contemporary practices. It has generally been considered that the terms of the marriage-bond favour a suspicion of haste and irregularity, but it will be seen on examination that they are merely copies of the ordinary forms in use at Worcester. We should not inspect these matters through the glasses of modern life. For the gift of a bed let us substitute that of one of its present correlatives, a valuable diamond-ring for example, and we should then instinctively feel not only that the gift was one of affection, but that its isolation was most probably due to the circumstance of a special provision of livelihood for her being unnecessary. This was undoubtedly the case in the present instance. The interests of the survivor were nearly always duly considered in the voluntary settlements formerly so often made between husband and wife, but even if there had been no such arrangements in this case, the latter would have been well provided for by
381 free-bench in the Rowington copyhold, and by dower on the rest of the property.

It is curious that the only real ground for a belief in any kind of estrangement between them should not hitherto have been noticed, but something to favour that impression may be fancied to be visible in Shakespeare's neglect to give his widow a life-interest either in their own residence at New Place or in its furniture. However liberally she may have been provided for, that circumstance would hardly reconcile us to the somewhat ungracious divorce of a wife from the control of her own household. It is clear that there must have been some valid reason for this arrangement, for the grant of such

an interest would not have affected the testator's evident desire to perpetuate a family estate, and there appears to be no other obvious design with which a limited gift of the mansion could have interfered. Perhaps the only theory that would be consistent with the terms of the will, and with the deep affection which she is traditionally recorded to have entertained for him to the end of her life, is the possibility of her having been afflicted with some chronic infirmity of a nature that precluded all hope of recovery. In such a case, to relieve her from household anxieties and select a comfortable apartment at New Place, where she would be under the care of an affectionate daughter and an experienced physician, would have been the wisest and kindest measure that could have been adopted.

It has been observed that a man's character is more fully revealed in a will than in any other less solemn document, and the experiences of most people will tend to favour the impression that nothing is so likely to be a really faithful record of natural impulses. Dismissing, as unworthy of consideration, the possibility of there having been an intentional neglect of his wife, it is pleasing to notice in Shakespeare's indications of the designer having been a conscientious and kind-hearted man, and one who was devoid of any sort of affectation. Independently of the bequests that amply provided for his children and sister, there are found in it a very unusual number of legacies to personal friends, and if some of its omissions, such as those of reference to the Hathaways, appear to be mysterious, it must be recollected that we are entirely unacquainted with family arrangements, the knowledge of some of which might explain them all. It has, moreover, been objected that

"the will contains less of sentiment than might be wished," that is to say, it may be presumed, by those who fancy that the great dramatist must have been, by virtue of his art, of an æsthetic and sentimental temperament. When Mr. West of Alscot was the first, in 1747, to exhibit a biographical interest in this relic, the Rev. Joseph Greene, master of the grammar-school of Stratford-on-Avon, who made a transcript for him, was also disappointed with its contents, and could not help observing that it was "absolutely void of the least particle of that spirit which animated our great poet." It might be thought from this impeachment that the worthy preceptor expected to find it written in blank-verse.

The preponderance of Shakespeare's domestic over his literary sympathies is strikingly exhibited in this final record. Not only is there no mention of Drayton, Ben Jonson, or any of his other literary friends, but an entire absence of reference to his own compositions. When these facts are considered adjunctively with his want of vigilance in not having previously secured authorized publications of any one of his dramas, and with other episodes of his life, it is difficult to resist the conviction that he was indifferent to the posthumous fate of his own writings. The editors of the first folio speak, indeed, in a tone of regret at his death having rendered a personal edition an impossibility; but they merely allude to this as a matter of fact or destiny, and as a reason for the devolution of the task upon themselves. They nowhere say, as they might naturally have done had it been the case, that the poet himself had meditated such an undertaking, or even that the slightest preparations for it had been made during

the years of his retirement. They distinctly assure us, however, that Shakespeare was in the habit of furnishing them with the autograph manuscripts of his plays, so that, if he had retained transcripts of them for his own ultimate use, or had afterwards collected them, it is reasonable to assume that they would have used his materials and not been so careful to mention that they themselves were the only gatherers. It may, indeed, be safely averred that the leading facts in the case, especially the apathy exhibited by the poet in his days of leisure, all tend to the persuasion that the composition of his immortal dramas was mainly stimulated by pecuniary results that were desired for the realization of social and domestic advantages. It has been frequently observed that, if this view be accepted, it is at the expense of investing him with a mean and sordid disposition. Such a conclusion may well be questioned. Literary ambition confers no moral grace, whilst its possession, as it might in Shakespeare's case, too often jeopardizes the attainment of independence as well as the paramount claims of family and kindred. That a solicitude in these latter directions should have predominated over vanity is a fact that should enhance our appreciation of his personal character, however it may affect the direct gratitude of posterity for the infinite pleasure and instruction derived from his writings.

One more section of the poet's will has yet to be considered, that solemn one which has been so frequently held to express the limits of his faith; but the terms in which the soul was devised were almost invariably those 369
that were thought to reflect the doctrine of the prevailing religion, so that the opening clause is no more a declaration that he was a Protestant than is the bequest by his

maternal grandfather, Robert Arden, of "my soul to Almighty God, and to our blessed Lady, Saint Mary, and to all the holy company of Heaven," a proof in itself that the last-named testator was a Catholic. Neither can it be determined that Shakespeare was one or the other from what is fancied to be the internal evidence on the subject afforded by his writings, for this has been the theme of innumerable essays with the result that the advocates for his Protestantism and those for his Catholicism are as nearly as may be on a level in respect to the validity of their inferences. Those who endeavour to ascertain a dramatist's own religious sentiments from the utterances of his characters,—each of whom should be to himself religiously true at the due moments of religious expression,—or from the variations in his mode of treating materials that had been dramatically fashioned by his predecessors, can only be successful amidst the works of less impartial artists. With respect to allusions to facts that are dependent upon knowledge and become in that way a species of evidence, there is only one, the
398 reference to evening-mass, which is of practical value in the enquiry; but this, assuming it to be as hopelessly
399 incorrect as is generally represented, is either a casual oversight or due to the very little opportunity that the author could have had for becoming familiar with Catholic practice. And if the merciless rigour with which the Catholic ministrations were suppressed is fairly borne in mind, no heed will be given to arguments based on the resort of the Shakespeares to those of the governmental Church. The poet, moreover, was educated under the Protestant direction, or he would not have been educated at all. But there is no doubt that John Shakespeare nourished all the while a latent attachment to the old

religion, and although, like most unconverted conformists of ordinary discretion who were exposed to the inquisitorial tactics of the authorities, he may have attempted to conceal his views even from the members of his own household; yet still, however determinately he may have refrained from giving them expression, it generally happens in such cases that a wave from the religious spirit of a parent will imperceptibly reach the hearts of his children and exercise more or less influence on their perceptions. And this last presumption is an important consideration in assessing the degree of credit to be given to the earliest notice that has come down to us respecting the character of Shakespeare's own belief,—the assertion of Davies that "he died a Papist." That this was the local tradition in the latter part of the seventeenth century does not admit of rational question. If the statement had emanated from a man like Prynne, addressing fanatics whose hatred of a stage-player would if possible have been intensified by the knowledge that he was a Romanist, then indeed a legitimate suspicion might have been entertained of the narrator's integrity; but here we have the testimony of a sober clergyman, who could have had no conceivable motive for deception, in what is obviously the casual note of a provincial hearsay. An element of fact in this testimony must be accepted in a biography in which the best, in this instance the only, direct evidence takes precedence over theories that are based on mere credibilities. At the same time it is anything but necessary to conclude that the great dramatist had very strong or pronounced views on theological matters. If that were the case, it is almost certain that there would have been some other early allusion to them, and perhaps in himself less of that spirit of toleration for every kind of opinion

which rendered him at home with all sorts and conditions of men,—as well as less of that freedom from inflexible preconceptions that might have affected the fidelity of his dramatic work. Many will hold that there was suffi-
400 cient of those qualities to betray a general indifference to creeds and rituals, and, at all events, whatever there was of Catholicism in his faith did not exclude the maintenance of affectionate relations with his ultra-protestant son-in-law. There is nothing in the will, in the list of witnesses, in the monumental inscription, in selection of friends, in the history of his professional career, in the little that tells of his personal character,—there is nothing, in short, in a single one of the contemporary evidences to indicate that he ever entered any of the circles of religious partisanship. Assuming, as we fairly may, that he had a leaning to the faith of his ancestors, we may yet be sure that the inclination was not of a nature that materially disturbed the easy-going acquiescence in the conditions of his surrounding world that added so much to the happiness of his later days. With perhaps one exception. It is surely within the bounds of possibility that he gave utterance to that inclination in the course of his last illness, and that he then declined, almost in the same breath in which he directed the kindly remembrances
401 to his fellow-actors, the offices of a vicar who preached the abolition of the stage, and regarded the writers of plays as so many Anti-Christs. This hypothesis would fully explain the currency of the tradition recorded by Davies, and at the same time meet the other conditions of the problem.

There was a funeral as well as a marriage in the family during the last days of Shakespeare. William Hart, who was carrying on the business of a hatter at

the premises now known as the Birth-place, and who was the husband of the poet's sister Joan, was buried at Stratford-on-Avon on April the 17th, 1616. Before another week had elapsed, the spirit of the great dramatist himself had fled.

Amongst the numerous popular errors of our ancestors was the belief that fevers often resulted from convivial indulgences. This was the current notion in England until a comparatively recent period, and its prevalence affected the traditional history of the poet's last illness. The facts were these. Late in the March of this calamitous year, or, accepting our computation, early in April, Shakespeare and his two friends, Drayton and Ben Jonson, were regaling themselves at an entertainment in one of the taverns at Stratford-on-Avon. It is recorded that the party was a jovial one, and according to a late but apparently genuine tradition, when the great dramatist was returning to New Place in the evening, he had taken more wine than was conducive to pedestrian accuracy. Shortly or immediately afterwards he was seized by the lamentable fever which terminated fatally on Tuesday, April the 23rd, 1616, a day which, according to our present mode of computation, would be the third of May. The cause of the malady, then attributed to undue festivity, would now be readily discernible in the wretched sanitary conditions surrounding his residence. If truth, and not romance, is to be invoked, were there the woodbine and sweet honeysuckle within reach of the poet's death-bed, their fragrance would have been neutralized by their vicinity to middens, fetid water-courses, mud-walls and piggeries.

The funeral was solemnized on the following Thursday, April the 25th, when all that was mortal of the great

dramatist was consigned to its final resting-place in the beautiful parish-church of his native town. His remains were deposited in the chancel, the selection of that locality for the interment being due to the circumstance of its then being the legal and customary burial-place of the owners of the tithes.

The grave is situated near the northern wall of the chancel, within a few paces of the ancient charnel-house, the arch of the doorway that opened to the latter, with its antique corbels, still remaining. The sepulchre was covered with a slab that bore the following inscription,—

> GOOD FREND, FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE
> TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED HEARE;
> BLESTE BE THE MAN THAT SPARES THES STONES,
> AND CVRST BE HE THAT MOVES MY BONES.

277 lines which, according to an early tradition, were selected by the poet himself for his epitaph. There is another
278 early but less probable statement that they were the poet's own composition; but, at all events, it may be safely gathered that they originated in some way from
389 an aversion on his part to the idea of a disturbance of his remains. It should be remembered that the transfer of bones from graves to the charnel-house was then an ordinary practice at Stratford-on-Avon. There has long
279 been a tradition that Shakespeare's feelings on this subject arose from a reflection on the ghastly appearance of that receptacle, which the elder Ireland, writing in the year 1795, describes as then containing "the largest assemblage of human bones" he had ever beheld. But whether this be the truth, or if it were merely the natural wish of a sensitive and thoughtful mind, it is a source of congratulation that the simple verses should have protected his ashes from sacrilege. The nearest approach

to an excavation into the grave of Shakespeare was made in the summer of the year 1796, in digging a vault in the immediate locality, when an opening appeared which was presumed to indicate the commencement of the site of the bard's remains. The most scrupulous care, however, was taken not to disturb the neighbouring earth in the slightest degree, the clerk having been placed there, until the brickwork of the adjoining vault was completed, to prevent anyone making an examination. No relics whatever were visible through the small opening that thus presented itself, and as the poet was buried in the ground, not in a vault, the chancel earth, moreover, formerly absorbing a large degree of moisture, 280
the great probability is that dust alone remains. This consideration may tend to discourage an irreverent opinion expressed by some, that it is due to the interests of science to unfold to the world the material abode which once held so great an intellect. It is not many years since a phalanx of trouble-tombs, lanterns and spades in hand, assembled in the chancel at dead of night, intent on disobeying the solemn injunction that the bones of Shakespeare were not to be disturbed. But the supplicatory lines prevailed. There were some amongst the number who, at the last moment, refused to incur the warning condemnation, and so the design was happily abandoned.

The honours of repose, which have thus far been conceded to the poet's remains, have not been extended to the tomb-stone. The latter had, by the middle of the last century, sunk below the level of the floor, and, about ninety years ago, had become so much decayed as to suggest a vandalic order for its removal, and, in its stead, to place a new slab, one which marks certainly the

locality of Shakespeare's grave and continues the record of the farewell lines, but indicates nothing more. The original memorial has wandered from its allotted station no one can tell whither,—a sacrifice to the insane worship of prosaic neatness, that mischievous demon whose votaries have practically destroyed so many of the priceless relics of ancient England and her gifted sons.

AFTER THE FUNERAL.

The poet's bereaved family now consisted of his widow, the Anne Hathaway of his youth; his elder daughter, Susanna, and her husband, John Hall; his other daughter, Judith, and her husband, Thomas Quiney; his sister Joan Hart and her three sons, William, Thomas and Michael; and his only grandchild, Elizabeth Hall, a little girl in the ninth year of her age.

Mr. Hall was in London in the following June, and on the twenty-second of that month he proved his father-in-law's will at the Archbishop of Canterbury's registry, an office then situated near St. Paul's. He also produced at the same time an inventory of the testator's household effects, but not a fragment of this latter document is known to be in existence. The testament itself is written upon what was termed pot-paper, a material then commonly used by solicitors for their drafts, and so called on account of its water-mark being either a pot or a jug. It is beyond reasonable doubt that, in its present form, it is a manuscript prepared for engrossment, and that the latter would have been subject to a careful revision or even to the introduction of additional matter. We may confidently assume that, if circumstances had permitted it, a fair copy would not only have been made before the execution, but that such

errors as those which are found in the statement of
383 the regnal years, or in the duplication of the bequest of the plate, would have been corrected. If the will be accepted as a lawyer's draft, there is really very little in it to create a serious perplexity. The form of the superscription is not, as has been surmised, one so peculiar that it can be fairly made the subject of a special theory. Although no instance of its use is to be found amongst the records of the local testamentary court, the Stratford wills having been almost invariably drawn up by laymen, it was a common formula with professional men, as may be seen from numerous examples of the early part of the seventeenth century which are attached to wills preserved at Somerset House. Neither can any conclusion be safely drawn from what was then an ordinary and formal disposition of the soul and the body.

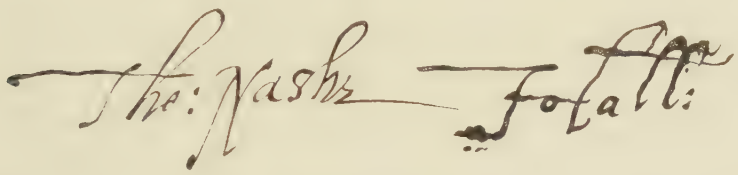
The terms of the bequest to his daughter Judith have been already considered. Her husband, Thomas Quiney, was living at the time of their marriage in a
142 small house on the west of the High Street, but a few months afterwards he removed to a much larger one,
143 which was known as the Cage, situated on the opposite side of the way, at the corner of Fore Bridge Street. It is in connection with the latter residence that he is first heard of as a vintner, a trade into which he may have entered with the capital bequeathed to his
144 wife, and in which he was supported by the Corporation and the leading inhabitants of the town. During the early period of his matrimonial life he appears to have occupied a good position, having been elected a burgess in 1617, and performing the duties of Chamberlain in 1621-1622 so satisfactorily that he was continued in

the office for a second term. His accounts for 1622-1623 were singularly prefaced by a French motto that speaks of the happiness of those who become wise through the lessons taught by the sufferings of others, and, from the official prominence given to the sentiment, it may perhaps be inferred that there was a personal application that would then have been generally understood. He was a fairly regular attendant at the meetings of the Town Council up to the year 1630, when he retired from that body, being at the same time involved in litigation, and making an unsuccessful attempt to dispose of the lease of his house; circumstances which indicate that his affairs had drifted into an unsatisfactory state. It was altogether an unfortunate year for him, for it is recorded in its annals that he was fined for swearing 145
and for encouraging tipplers in his shop. The history of the remainder of his career is not pleasurable. Although he still continued to be patronized by the local authorities, prosperity had forsaken him, and he had to struggle with a failing business for many years, until ultimately, some time about the year 1652, he removed to the metropolis. There are reasons for believing that he was then in poverty, finding in London a kind protector in his brother Richard, a wealthy grocer, and that he died there a few 146
years after his departure from Stratford. There were no children left to regret their father's reverses. His family, by his only wife Judith, consisted of three sons, the eldest, Shakespeare Quiney, dying in his infancy, and the two 147
others, Richard and Thomas, soon after their arrival at manhood. As neither of the latter had issue, the line from the poet in this direction became extinct in 1662 on the death of their mother, who had a few days previously 148
attained the ripe age of seventy-seven.

The Halls, who were the executors and chief legatees,
173 made New Place their established residence soon after the poet's decease. Mr. John Hall, as he is almost invariably termed in the Stratford records, was a Master of Arts, but he never received the honour of a medical degree. His reputation, however, was independent of titles, for no country doctor ever achieved a greater
174 popularity. His advice was solicited in every direction, and he was summoned more than once to attend the Earl and Countess of Northampton at Ludlow Castle, a distance of over fourty miles, no trifling journey along the bridle-paths of those days. And even in such times of fierce religious animosities, the desire to secure his advice outweighed all prejudices, for, notwithstanding his avowed Protestantism, it is recorded by the Linacre professor, in 1657, that "such as hated him for his religion often made use of him." It is clear, indeed, that, after the death of Shakespeare, whatever may have been the case previously, he openly exhibited strong
175 religious tendencies in the direction of puritanism, and these may have led to an indifference for the fate of any dramatic manuscripts that might have come into his hands. It would also seem from notices of a quarrel he had with the Corporation, from which he was expelled in
176 1633, that he was somewhat of a perverse and impetuous disposition. He died on November the 25th, 1635, the "ringing of the great bell" attending his obsequies in
177 the chancel of the parish church on the following day. Favour was exhibited in the permission to select that locality for the physician's interment, his share of the tithe-lease having been disposed of long previously. The concession was due either to the influence of his son-in-law, who was one of the tithe-owners, or to the

latter circumstance being taken to confer the special burial-right on the whole family. However that may be, it is evident that there was a desire on the part of Mrs. Hall that the last resting-places of herself and her family should be near to those of her parents.

In a nuncupative will that was made by Mr. Hall a few hours before he died, he gave Thomas Nash, the husband of his only child, his "study of books." As



the Halls were Shakespeare's residuary legatees, there can hardly be a doubt that any volumes that had been possessed by the latter at Stratford-on-Avon were included in this bequest. It may also perhaps be assumed that there was a study at New Place in the time of the great dramatist. At all events there was clearly a sitting-room in the house that could have been used for the purposes of one, but, from the absence of all reference to books in the will of 1616, it may be safely inferred that the poet himself was not the owner of many such luxuries. Anything like a private library, even of the smallest dimensions, was then of the rarest occurrence, and that Shakespeare ever owned one at any time of his life is exceedingly improbable. The folios of Holinshed and Plutarch, the former in the edition of 1586 and the latter in probably that of 1595, are amongst the few volumes 77
that can be positively said to have been in his own hands. In that age of common-place books it must not be too hastily assumed that individual passages, such as

that he adapted from Montaigne, were taken from the works themselves.

It is in the narrative of a circumstance that occurred at New Place a few years after Hall's death, that we
178 obtain the only interesting personal glimpse we are ever likely to have of Shakespeare's eldest daughter. It exhibits her in one direction as a true scion of the poet, —a shrewd person of business, caring more for gold than for books, albeit she was somewhat disturbed at the notion of parting with any of the latter that had been written by her husband, to whom she was warmly
179 attached. During the civil wars, about the year 1642, a surgeon named James Cooke, attending in his professional capacity on a detachment stationed at Stratford-bridge, was invited to New Place to examine the books which the doctor had left behind him. "After a view of them," as he observes, Mrs. Hall "told me she had some books left by one that professed physic with her husband for some money;—I told her, if I liked them, I would give her the money again;—she brought them forth, amongst which there was this, with another of the authors, both intended for the press;—I, being acquainted with Mr. Hall's hand, told her that one or two of them were her husband's, and showed them her; —she denied; I affirmed, till I perceived she began to be offended;—at last I returned her the money." By the word *this*, Cooke refers to the manuscript Latin medical case-book which he translated into English, and published in 1657. The conversation here recorded would appear to show that Mrs. Hall's education had not been of an enlarged character; that books and manuscripts, even when they were the productions of her own husband, were not of much interest to her.

Were it otherwise, it would be difficult to account for the pertinacity with which she insisted upon the book of cases not being in the doctor's handwriting; for his caligraphy is of an uniform and somewhat peculiar description, not readily to be mistaken for any of the ordinary styles of writing then in use. It is very possible, however, that the affixion of her signature to a document was the extent of her chirographical ability, for the art of writing was then rare amongst the ladies of the middle class, and her sister was a marks-woman. Such an educational defect would of course have passed unnoticed in those days, and could not have affected the estimation in which she was held for a high order of intelligence, religious fervour and sympathetic charity,—

> Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,
> Wise to salvation was good Mistris Hall;
> Something of Shakespere was in that, but this
> Wholy of Him with whom she's now in blisse.
> Then, Passenger, ha'st ne're a teare
> To weepe with her that wept with all;—
> That wept, yet set her selfe to chere
> Them up with comforts cordiall?
> Her love shall live, her mercy spread,
> When thou ha'st nere a teare to shed.

lines engraved, by the direction of some loving hand, on the grave-stone that records her decease on July the 11th, 180
1649. The term *witty* is of course here used in the old sense of brightly intelligent, and the allusion in the fourth line is probably to the Saviour as the Dispenser of a wisdom unconnected with mortal intellect. In other language, while she inherited some of the mental endowments of her father, her hopes of salvation rested on a Foundation that was independent of such gifts.

Eliza Nash
Susanna Gold

The only child of the Halls, Mistress Elizabeth as she is described in the nuptial register, with the title usually given in former days to single ladies, was married at Stratford-on-Avon in April, 1626, to Thomas Nash, a resident of that town and a man of considerable property. Born in 1593, he was in his youth a student at Lincoln's Inn, and had no doubt been all his life well acquainted with the bride's family, both his father and uncle having 181
been personal friends of Shakespeare. Mrs. Nash be- 182
came a widow in 1647, but about two years afterwards 183
she married John Barnard, a gentleman of wealth and position in the county of Northampton. Leaving no issue by either husband, the lineal descent from the poet terminated at her death in the year 1670.—There now only remain to add a few notes on the ultimate destinies of the Shakespearean estates.

In the year 1624 the poet's son-in-law, John Hall, parted with the share in the tithes that had been pur- 257
chased from Huband in 1605. It formed a part of the residuary estate. The land bought from the Combes, the Henley Street property and New Place, continued in the family until the death of the poet's last descendant, 219
Lady Barnard, in 1670. The two houses in Henley Street were included in the entail, but one was subject to the life-interest of the poet's sister, Joan Hart, who died in 1646. Lady Barnard devised both of them to the Harts, in whose possession they remained until the beginning of the present century.

Judith Quiney duly surrendered her interest in the Rowington copyhold to her sister, and the latter was formally admitted to it at one of the manorial courts. 274
This little estate remained in the possession of the Halls at least down to the year 1633, but its subsequent descent

until it is noticed as being in the hands of the Cloptons early in the last century, is unknown.

250 The Blackfriars estate followed the succession of the other properties until 1647, but then, or some few years afterwards, it came to be treated as a fee-simple belonging to Mrs. Barnard, who parted with it, either by sale or gift, to her kinsman, Edward Bagley. The date of this transfer is not known, but it occurred some time in or before 1667, in the August of which year the latter sold the property to Sir Heneage Fetherston. The buildings upon it had been destroyed in the fire of London, Bagley receiving only £35 for the land, and it may be that the estate did not come into his hands until after, and perhaps in consequence of, that calamity. With the possible exception of the Getley copyhold, this was the first disseverance of any of the poet's estates from the hands of his descendants.

RECORDS OF AFFECTION.

Although few of us imagine that the homely lines on Shakespeare's grave-stone were his own composition, there can be little doubt that they owe their position to an affectionate observance of one of his latest wishes. Destitute even of a nominal record, and placed in a line of descriptive and somewhat elaborate family memorials, it is difficult to believe that an inscription, so unique in its simplicity, could have another history. And it was, in all probability, the designedly complete isolation of these verses that suggested to his relatives the propriety of raising an eligible monument in the immediate vicinity, on the only spot, indeed, in which there could have been erected a cenotaph that harmonized with the associations of his grave.

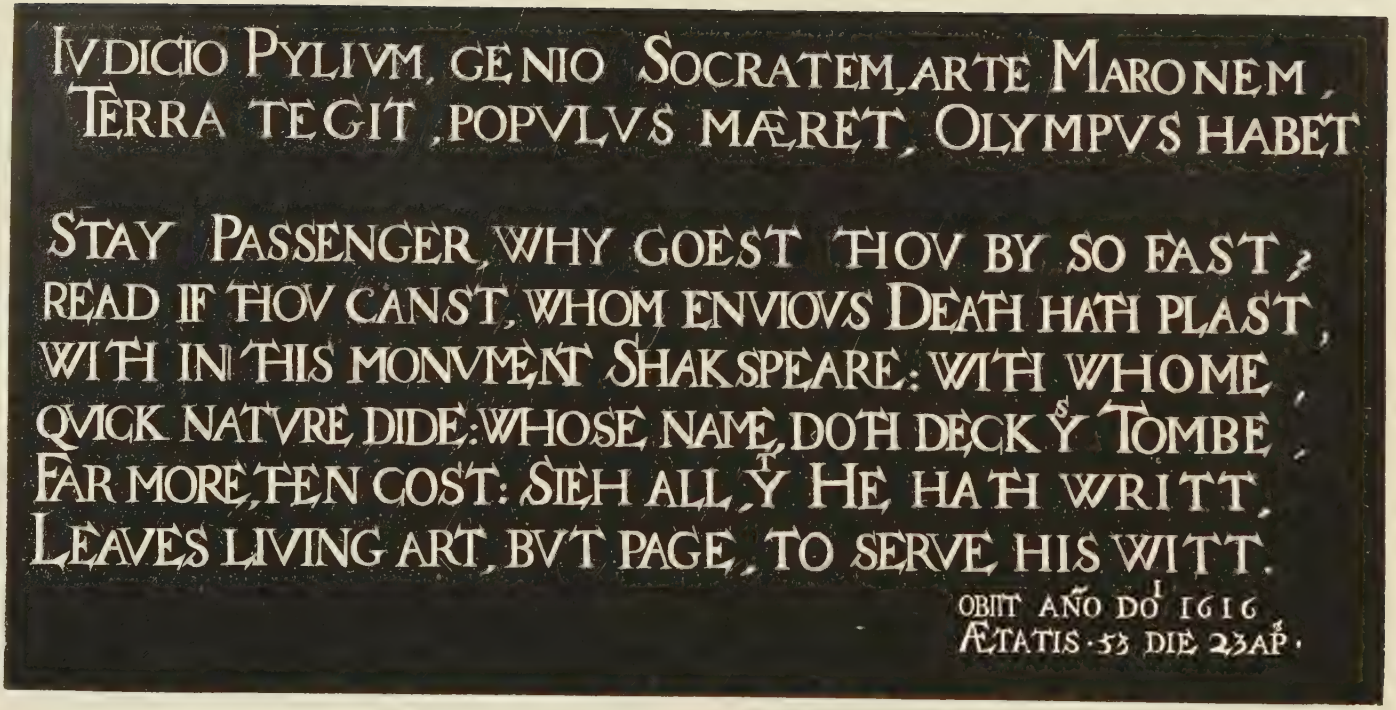
This monument was erected on the northern wall of the chancel, at an elevation of some five feet above the pavement, and within a few paces of the grave. Expense does not appear to have been spared in its preparation, but there is no display of vulgar ostentation, the whole being admirably suited for the main object of the design, the formation of a niche for the reception of a life-sized bust. The precise history of the construction of the effigy is unknown, but there is an old tradition to the effect that the artist had the use of a posthumous cast of the face of his subject. If this

were the case, it may be safely assumed that when John Hall, the executor and son-in-law, was in London in June, a few weeks after Shakespeare's decease, he took the opportunity of leaving the cast in the hands of a person on whom he thought that he could best rely for the production of a satisfactory likeness. He accordingly selected an individual whose place of business was near the western door of St. Saviour's church, within a few minutes' walk of the Globe Theatre, and, therefore, one to whom the poet's appearance was no doubt familiar. The name of this sculptor was Gerard Johnson, the son of a native of Amsterdam who had settled in England as "a tombe-maker" in the previous reign, and who had died in Southwark a few years previously.

The exact time at which the monument was erected in the church is unknown, but it is alluded to by Leonard Digges as being there in the year 1623. The bust must, therefore, have been submitted to the approval of the Halls, who could hardly have been satisfied with a mere fanciful image. There is, however, no doubt that it was an authentic representation of the great dramatist, but it has unfortunately been so tampered with in modern times that much of the absorbing interest with which it would otherwise have been surrounded has evaporated. It was originally painted in imitation of life, the face and hands of the usual flesh colour, the eyes a light hazel, and the hair and beard auburn. The realization of the costume was similarly attempted by the use of scarlet for the doublet, black for the loose gown, and white for the collar and wristbands. But colours on stone are only of temporary endurance, and not only had so large a portion of them disappeared in the lapse of a hundred and thirty years, but so much decay was observable in

parts of the effigy that it was considered advisable in 1748 to have it entirely renovated. It is of course impossible at this day to assess the extent of the mischief that may have been perpetrated on that occasion, but that it was very considerable may be inferred from a contemporary account of the directions given to the artist, who was instructed to "beautify" as well as "repair," and to make the whole "as like as possible to what it was when first erected." The bust, which represents the poet in the act of composition, had also been deprived of the fore-finger of the right hand, a pen and a fragment of the adjoining thumb, all of which were restored at the same time in new material. After a while these pieces of stone again fell off, and two of them, those belonging to the finger and thumb, the pen thenceforth being represented by a quill, were refashioned by one William Roberts of Oxford in 1790; and shortly afterwards, that is to say, in 1793, Malone persuaded the vicar to allow the whole of the bust to be painted in white. It remained in this last-mentioned state for many years, but, in 1861, there was a second imitation of the original colouring. This step was induced by the seriously adverse criticism to which the operation of 1793 had been subjected, but although the action then taken has been so frequently condemned, it did not altogether obliterate the semblance of an intellectual human being, and this is more than can be said of the miserable travesty which now distresses the eye of the pilgrim.

In estimating the degree of affection that suggested the order for this elaborate monument, it will be desirable to bear in mind the strong puritanical tendencies of the Halls. They were members of a sect who held every-thing connected with the stage in wild abhorrence, so that


IVDICIO PYLIVM, GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM,
TERRA TEGIT, POPVLVS MÆRET, OLYMPVS HABET

STAY PASSENGER, WHY GOEST THOV BY SO FAST;
READ IF THOV CANST, WHOM ENVIOVS DEATH HATH PLAST,
WITH IN THIS MONVMENT SHAKSPEARE: WITH WHOME
QVICK NATVRE DIDE: WHOSE NAME, DOTH DECK Ỹ TOMBE,
FAR MORE, FEN COST: SIEH ALL Ỹ HE HATH WRITT,
LEAVES LIVING ART, BVT PAGE, TO SERVE HIS WITT.

OBIIT AÑO DOI 1616
ÆTATIS 53 DIE 23AP.

it must have required all the courage inspired by a loving memory to have dictated the erection not only of an unusually handsome memorial, but of one which proclaimed, in the midst of their religious community, the transcendent literary merits of a dramatist. Upon a rectangular tablet, placed below the bust, are engraven the following lines,—

> IVDICIO PYLIVM, GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM,
> TERRA TEGIT, POPVLVS MÆRET, OLYMPVS HABET.
>
> STAY PASSENGER, WHY GOEST THOV BY SO FAST,
> READ, IF THOV CANST, WHOM ENVIOVS DEATH HATH PLAST
> WITHIN THIS MONVMENT, SHAKSPEARE, WITH WHOME
> QVICK NATVRE DIDE; WHOSE NAME DOTH DECK YS. TOMBE
> FAR MORE THEN COST; SITH ALL YT. HE HATH WRITT
> LEAVES LIVING ART BVT PAGE TO SERVE HIS WITT.
> OBIIT ANO. DOI. 1616. ÆTATIS 53. DIE 23 AP.

It is not likely that these verses were composed either by a Stratfordian, or by any one acquainted with their destined position, for otherwise the writer could hardly have spoken of Death having placed Shakespeare "within this monument." However that may be, it is certain that they must have been inscribed with the full sanction of his eldest daughter, who, according to tradition, was at the sole expense of the memorial. It is curious that there should be no allusion in them to his personal character, and they certainly are not remarkable for poetical beauty. These shortcomings are, however, compensated by the earliest recognition of the great dramatist as the unrivalled interpreter of nature. With whom quick Nature died! The writer thus managed to express in five words the very essence of all sound criticism.

It is obvious, therefore, that Mrs. Hall did not allow the prejudices that might have been imbibed with her religious tendencies to interfere with an appreciation of

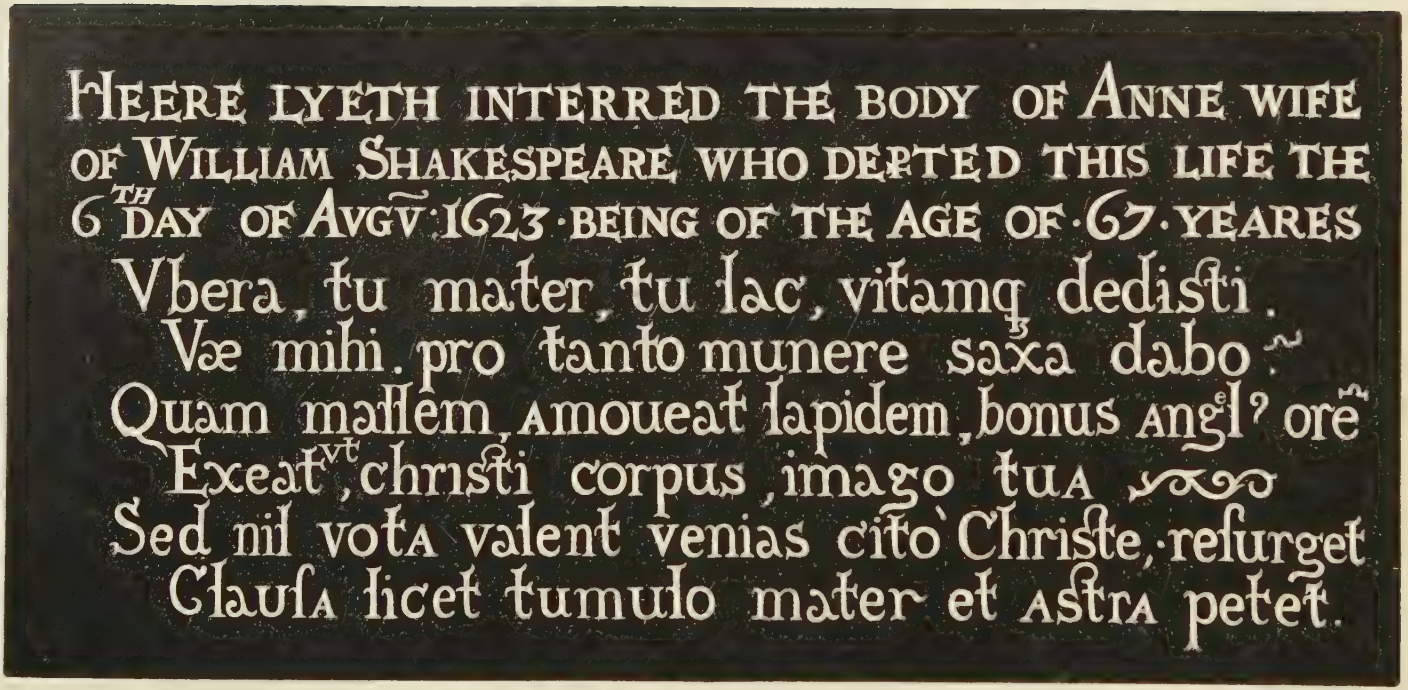
her father's dramatic genius. Neither can any one reasonably doubt that her mother, however unable, as was most probably the case, to read a line of his works, was gratified by the open acknowledgment of her husband's literary eminence. But the pleasure derived from these sentiments must have been impaired by the violent antipathy entertained by large classes, in and near Stratford-on-Avon, towards the stage and its votaries. It is true that a rigorous bye-law against them, which was enacted in that town in 1612, did not absolutely banish theatrical performances from the locality, but the active spirit of the opposition was unmistakably evinced a few years later, when, in 1622, six shillings were "payd to the Kinges players for not playinge in the hall." This curious species of bribery was obviously the result of a deference to the Court, it being no doubt considered imprudent to permit the royal servants to depart without a compensation for their unceremonious dismissal. They were evidently regarded as a privileged company, for at a Court Baron held in October, 1616, at the neighbouring town of Henley-in-Arden, an order was unanimously passed by the leading inhabitants that no other actors should have the use of their town-hall.

When the monument was first erected, there can, indeed, be little doubt that most of the inhabitants of Stratford-on-Avon, including the puritanical vicar, regarded it as the memorial of one whose literary career had, to say the least, been painfully useless to society. A like fanaticism no doubt pervaded no insignificant section of Londoners, but it was not sufficiently dominant in the metropolis to restrain the continued popularity of the works of the great dramatist, those by which, to quote the lines of a contemporary,—"outlive= Thy tomb

thy name must;—when that stone is rent,=And Time dissolves thy Stratford monument,=Here we alive shall view thee still."

There was no real cessation in the metropolitan favour shown to these works for some years after their author's decease. The audiences of course required the production of a series of novelties, but it was an event, hitherto unprecedented in the annals of the English stage, for a number of what were then regarded as old plays, the product of one writer, to be revived again and again to overflowing houses. We are told, on unimpeachable authority, that there was not a seat unoccupied whenever the public had the opportunity of renewing their acquaintance with the favourite Shakespearean characters; and this taste must have prevailed at all events till August, 1623, when a special revival of the Winter's Tale is known to have been in preparation. In that very month the poet's widow had expired at 330
Stratford-on-Avon.

Mrs. Shakespeare did not live to witness the appearance of the first collective edition of her husband's plays. At the time of her death, however, a large portion of that remarkable book must have been in type, for it was published in the following November, "at the charges of W. Jaggard, Ed. Blount, J. Smithweeke and W. Aspley, 1623." The materials for the work were collected by Hemmings and Condell, then the leading proprietors and managers of the Globe and Blackfriars theatres, and the owners of most, if not all, of the Shakespearean 281
dramas. These estimable men, who are kindly remembered in the poet's will, are not likely to have encouraged the speculation from motives of gain, for the sum, if any, they received from the publishers for their assistance


HEERE LYETH INTERRED THE BODY OF ANNE WIFE
OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE WHO DEPTED THIS LIFE THE
6 TH DAY OF AVGV: 1623 · BEING OF THE AGE OF · 67 · YEARES
Vbera, tu mater, tu lac, vitamq; dedisti.
Væ mihi, pro tanto munere saxa dabo.
Quam mallem, amoueat lapidem, bonus angl⁹ ore
Exeat vt, christi corpus, imago tua
Sed nil vota valent venias cito Christe, · resurget
Clausa licet tumulo mater et astra petet.

could not at the best have more than compensated for the loss of the exclusive possession of even a small number of attractive pieces. So far, however, from their being remunerated for their trouble, it is all but certain that, if the speculators had been armed with the independence of paymasters, the latter would not have consented to have increased their necessarily large pecuniary risk by the addition of a number of compositions that had become obsolete. When, therefore, we find Hemmings and Condell not only initiating and vigorously sup- 370
porting the design, but expressing their regret that Shakespeare himself had not lived to direct the publication, who can doubt that they were acting as trustees for his memory, or that the noble volume was a record of their affection? Who can ungraciously question their sincerity when they thus touchingly allude to the writings of their departed friend and colleague,—"we have but collected them and done an office to the dead, to procure his orphans guardians; without ambition either of self-profit or fame; only to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive as was our Shakespeare?" What plausible reason can be given for not accepting the literal truth of their description of themselves as "a pair so careful to show their gratitude to the dead," whether that gratitude were for extrinsic services, or for the benefits that the author's dramatic genius had conferred upon their theatres?

There is no intimation, nor is it likely, that this famous work was conducted through the press under the superintendence of a special editor. Hemmings and Condell speak of themselves as mere gatherers, and it is nearly certain that all that they did was to ransack their dramatic stores for the best copies of the plays

that they could find, handing those copies over to the printers in the full persuasion that, in taking this course, they were morally relieved of further responsibility. They appear to have been guided in their selection entirely by their knowledge of the authorship, and it is obvious that, when the copies alluded to were transferred to the press, no instructions were given to attempt an order of merit or composition. But these circumstances do not imply the absence of trouble and care, for their searches must have extended over the accumulated play-books of many years, and out of the thirty-six dramas which they had collected, one-half had never been published in any shape. Authentic copies, however, of fourteen of the others, some probably by arrangement with the managers, had appeared in printed quarto, and four mutilated versions, that had been surreptitiously obtained, were also accessible to the public. The latter, to which, perhaps, were to be added a few of the same kind which have long since disappeared, are the pieces mentioned by the gatherers as "divers stolen and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors." Two of the authentic quarto editions, those of Romeo and Hamlet, were preceded by the issue of fragmentary and garbled texts.

The manuscripts of Shakespeare's plays encountered a number of vicissitudes during the thirty years that elapsed from the inception of his dramatic career. Their first trial was held before the Master of the Revels, who was invested with compulsory powers of excision and alteration. They were next read in taverns before the selected actors, who were invariably treated with wine on such occasions, and whose criticisms, under so agreeable a liberality, must always have been of a lively, and,

no doubt, sometimes of a peremptory nature. There is nothing to show that fair copies were ever made in those days for the prompters, who, in all likelihood, used the author's original manuscripts after they had been submitted to the tribunals just mentioned; and these manuscripts would again, especially at revivals, have been liable to modifications suggested by the exigencies of the stage. Then there was the contingent probability of further variations being insisted upon at rehearsals, and of other changes being enforced by theatrical arrangements when the London prompt copies were used in the provinces. In addition to all these perils, there were those arising from the occasional necessity of supplying the place of worn-out acting copies by new transcripts, and although printed editions were now and then substituted, the latter were equally at the mercy of the company. Some of the manuscripts, before they reached the hands of the printers or the intermediate scribe, must have abounded with alterations, portions marked for omission, all sorts of directions, and, finally, additions that were either written on the margins or on inserted scraps of paper. So far, then, from being astonished at the textual imperfections of the folio, we ought to be profoundly thankful for what is, under the circumstances, its marvellous state of comparative excellence. Hemmings and Condell did the best they could to the best of their judgment. It never could have entered their imagination that the day would arrive for the comfort of intellectual life to be marred by the distorted texts of Hamlet and Lear. There cannot, indeed, be a doubt that, according to their lights, they expressed a sincere conviction when they delivered the immortal dramas to

the public as being "absolute in their numbers, as he (Shakespeare) conceived them."

There are also good reasons for believing that they were solicitous to publish all the genuine dramas of Shakespeare, that is to say, all the plays originally written by him, to the exclusion of any to which he was merely a contributor. Betterton, observes Gildon, in his Essay on the Stage, 1710, "more than once assur'd me that the first folio edition by the players contain'd all those which were truely his;" and this statement was made by a person who had been connected, in early life, with an officer of the Blackfriars' company, and who had, therefore, an opportunity of being acquainted with the opinions held at the Shakespearean theatres before their dissolution. There is, moreover, perfect evidence in the first folio itself that Hemmings and Condell were bent on the publication of every one of their friend's dramas; for, if they had been in the least degree guided by a commercial spirit, such obsolete plays as the three parts of Henry the Sixth would assuredly have been either omitted, or their places supplied by newer and more attractive compositions. No difficulty would have attended the second expedient. As proprietors they had in their repertoire the London Prodigal and the Yorkshire Tragedy, both of them pieces that had been openly ascribed to the great dramatist, and the latter so well holding its ground that it had been reissued a few years previously.

The admittance of obsolete dramas into the folio, and the exclusion of such works as those last named, are circumstances that deserve to be very attentively weighed. They speak volumes in favour of the opinion

that Hemmings and Condell executed their task conscientiously. And if it is not in our power to ingenuously acquiesce in that conclusion, we shall be launched on a sea with a chart in which are unmarked perilous quicksands of intuitive opinions. Especially is the vessel itself in danger if it touches the insidious bank raised up from doubts on the authenticity of Titus Andronicus and the several parts of Henry the Sixth. The external testimonies to the reality of the former as the work of Shakespeare are irrefutable;—no one can ignore them who does not allow his own natural perception to cancel the direct evidences of three of the author's intimate friends;—and yet, so difficult is it, with our present notions, to realize the idea of the gentle-minded poet constructing a drama on the basis of a singularly revolting tale, apparently without an effort to modify the worst of its horrors, there are many who would not believe that it emanated from his pen, even if the fact had been acknowledged by the writer himself under his own hand and seal. If, however, it be borne in mind that Titus Andronicus was Shakespeare's earliest tragedy,—that it is not fair to test its genuineness by the side of his later productions,—that in it he dramatized, in the interests of the managers, a story unequivocally acceptable to the public of the day,—and if it be also remembered that, in all probability, he had not yet emancipated himself from a following of his great predecessor, Marlowe, then perhaps the adverse opinion just mentioned may not be so positively enunciated. Its little exhibition of classical knowledge, obviously not beyond the powers of a man of "small Latin," may be merely an example of the fleeting taste which led him to the subjects of his

early poems; while, as to the objections raised from the metre, one can only suggest that the arbitrary limitation of an author's discretional fancy in his measures is generally, as in this instance, beyond the range of practical argument. It may be, however, that, to the adoption of metrical forms presumed to suit the conduct of the narrative, is owing some of the turgid and disagreeable character of the production: and as soon as its prose is substituted for verse, we have, in the dialogue with the clown, a little episode full of the inimitable quiet humour with which the great dramatist, in varied forms, endows so many of his subordinate characters. But the best internal evidence in support of the authenticity, both of Titus Andronicus and the three parts of Henry the Sixth, is their general adherence to one of the distinguishing and most important features of Shakespeare's dramatic genius,—the preservation of what may be termed the
199 unity of character in each individual, that is to say, the consistency of his traits of disposition and bearing with themselves and with his actions.

The evidence of Meres, which is not only that of an accomplished scholar giving his voluntary opinion within five years from the appearance of Titus Andronicus, but also that of one who has faithfully recorded so many other literary facts, ought to satisfy us that there is no alternative but to receive that drama as one of the genuine works of Shakespeare. Upon what true principle can we at this day undertake to reject, on our own judgments, the testimony of an Elizabethan witness upon one Shakespearean declaration at the same moment that we unhesitatingly accept it in respect to all the others? It is also obvious that while, on the one hand, neither Meres, nor Hemmings, nor Condell entertained the

remotest suspicion that the tragedy could ever be considered discreditable to its author, they could not, on the other, have had, in this case, the semblance of a motive for perpetrating a fraud upon their readers. When the subject comes to be fairly investigated, it will be seen that there is nothing, in the writings of any of the three, to warrant a suspicion that there was a single wilful misrepresentation of facts. The opponents of this view have, indeed, laid great stress on the statement made by the promoters of the first folio, to the effect that, owing to his rapidity of composition, they had "scarce received" from him, that is, from the great dramatist, "a blot in his papers," words that have been taken to indicate that the entire volume was printed from the author's own manuscripts, and this, as we know, would have been a serious misrepresentation. But the language of Hemmings and Condell does not necessarily, under any line of interpretation, express so much, and, in all probability, they are here speaking of themselves in their managerial capacity, referring to the singularly few corrections that they had observed in the autograph manuscripts which he had *originally* delivered to them for the use of the theatre.

There is but one more subject involving the authority of Hemmings and Condell that requires notice,—the degree of credit to be given to their statement respecting the nature of the imperfect quartos. In reference to this question, it is important to bear in mind that the rapid movement of Shakespeare's pen was the subject of a current belief amongst his theatrical contemporaries. "The players," observes Ben Jonson, "have *often* mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare that, in his writing, whatsoever he penned he never blotted out line." There

is, moreover, ample internal evidence that many of his plays were written in haste, and it is unlikely that so expeditious a composer would have refashioned his own works in preference to undertaking what was to him the easy creation of new ones. We know, indeed, positively that, in one instance, he re-wrote portions of a drama, but also, with nearly equal certainty, that the substituted lines were very limited in number, and that they did not affect the characterial integrity of the original. A similar process may have been adopted with other plays, but such incidents of work are essentially different from those suggested by the theory which assumes that the "divers maimed and deformed copies," reported in the first folio are the author's crude sketches, and that the latter have been transformed into works of art by elaborate revision, additional scenes and expansions of character. But this notion, like some others now in vogue, can only be accepted by those who consider it decorous or reasonable to allow modern opinions to supersede, in matters of fact, the direct testimony of Shakespeare's own personal friends.

If the latter had not volunteered, in affectionate remembrance of their colleague, to gather together the works of Shakespeare, some of the noblest monuments of his genius might, and probably would, have been for ever lost. Nor in our measure of gratitude for the first folio, the greatest literary treasure the world possesses, should we neglect to include a tribute to Ben Jonson. The loving interest taken by that distinguished writer in the publication is evinced not only by his matchless eulogy of the great dramatist, but also by the charming lines in which he vouches for his friend's likeness in the engraved portrait which forms so conspicuous an object in the

title-page. The Stratford effigy and this engraving are the only unquestionably authentic representations of the living Shakespeare that are known to exist, not one of the numerous others, for which claims to the distinction have been advanced, having an evidential pedigree of a satisfactory character. But in like manner as there have arisen in these days critics who, dispensing altogether with the old contemporary evidences, can enter so perfectly into all the vicissitudes of Shakespeare's intellectual temperament that they can authoritatively identify at a glance every line that he did write, and, with equal precision, every sentence that he did not;—even so there are others to whom a picture's history is not of the slightest moment, their reflective instinct enabling them, without effort or investigation, to recognise in an old curiosity shop the dramatic visage that belonged to the author of Hamlet. Lowlier votaries can only bow their heads in silence.

THE LATER THEATRES.

The following are copies of documents which relate to the Blackfriars and Globe Theatres, the establishments with which the great dramatist was specially connected in the later period of his metropolitan career.

I. Deed of Feoffment from Sir William More of Loseley, co. Surrey, to James Burbage, 4 February, 1596, conveying to the latter that portion of a large house in Blackfriars which was afterwards converted by him into a theatre.

This indenture made the fourth daye of Februarie, in the eighte and thirtyth yeare of the raigne of our Soveraigne lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queene of Englande, Fraunce and Irelande, Defendor of the Fayth, &c., betwene Sir William More of Loseley in the county of Surrey, knight, of thone partye, and James Burbage of Hollowell in the countye of Middlesex, gentleman, of thother partye, Witnesseth that the said Sir William More, for and in consideracyon of the some of sixe hundreth poundes of lawfull money of England to him by the said James Burbage at and before thensealinge of theis presentes truelye payd, whereof and wherewith he, the said Sir William More, dothe acknowledge and confesse himselfe fully satysfied and paid, and thereof and of every parte thereof doth cleirely acquite and discharge the said James Burbage, his heyres, executors and administrators, and every of them, by theis presentes hath bargayned, sold, alyened, enfeoffed and confirmed, and by theis presentes doth fully and cleirelye bargaine, sell, alyen, enfeoffe and confirme to the said James Burbage, his heires and assignes, for ever, all those seaven greate upper romes as they are nowe devided, beinge all uppon one flower and sometyme beinge one greate and entire rome, with the roufe over the same covered with lead ; together also with all the lead that doth cover the same seaven greate upper roemes, and also all the stone stayres leadinge upp unto the leades or roufe over the said seaven greate upper romes out of the said seaven greate upper romes ; and also all the greate stone walles and other walles which doe enclose, devide and belonge to, the same seaven greate upper romes ; and also all that greate payre of wyndinge stayres, with the stayre-case thereunto belongeinge, which leadeth upp unto the same seaven greate upper romes out of the greate yarde there which doth lye nexte unto the Pype Office ; which said seaven greate upper romes were late in the teanure or occupacyon of William de Lawne, Doctor of Phisick, or of his assignes, and are scituate, lyeinge and beinge within the prescincte of the late Blackfryers Preachers nere Ludgate in London ; together also with all the waynescott, glasse, dores, lockes, keyes and boltes to the same seaven greate upper romes and other the premisses by theis presentes bargayned and sold incident or apperteyninge, or beinge fixed or fastened thereunto ; togeather also with the easemente and commoditie of a vaulte beinge under some parte of the sayde seaven greate upper romes, or under the entrye or voyde rome lyeinge betwene those seaven greate upper romes and the sayde Pipe Office, by a stole and tonnell to be made into the same vault in and out of the greate stone wall in the ynner side thereof next and adjoyneinge to the said entry or voide rome, beinge towardes the south ; and alsoe all those romes and lodginges, with the kitchin thereunto adjoyninge, called the Midle Romes or Midle Stories, late beinge in the tenure or occupacion of Rocco Bonnetto, and nowe beinge in the tenure or occupacyon of Thomas Bruskett, gentleman, or of his assignes, conteyninge in length fyftie twoo foote

of assize more or lesse, and in bredith thirtie seaven foote of assize more or lesse, lyeing and beinge directlye under parte of those of the sayd seaven greate upper romes which lye westwardes ; which said Mydle Romes or Mydle Stories doe extende in length southwardes to a parte of the house of Sir George Cary, knight ; and also all the stone walles and other walles which doe enclose, devide and belonge to, the same Midle Romes or Midle Stories, together alsoe with the dore and entrey which doe lye nexte unto the gate entringe into the house of the said Sir George Cary, and used to and from the said Midle Romes or Midle Stories out of a lane or waye leadinge unto the house of the sayd Sir George Cary, with free waye, ingres, egres and regres, into and from the said Midle Romes or Midle Stories in, by and through the waies nowe used to the said house of the said Sir George Cary ; and also all those twoo vaultes or sellers late beinge in thoccupacyon of the said Rocco Bonnetto, lyeinge under parte of the said Midle Romes or Midle Stories at the north end thereof, as they are nowe devided, and are nowe in the teanure or occupacion of the said Thomas Bruskett and of John Favor, and are adjoyneinge to the twoo lytle yardes nowe in thoccupacyons of Peter Johnson and of the sayd John Favor, together also with the stayres leadinge into the same vaultes or cellers out of the foresaid kitchen in thoccupacyon of the said Thomas Bruskett ; and also all those two upper romes or chambers with a lyttle butterey at the north end of the said seaven greate upper romes and on the weste side thereof, nowe being in thoccupacyon of Charles Bradshawe, together with the voyd rome, waye and passage, nowe thereunto used from the said seaven greate upper romes ; and also all those twoo romes or loftes now in thoccupacion of Edward Merry, thone of them lyeinge and beinge above or over the said two upper romes or chambers in thoccupacion of the said Charles Bradshawe, and on thest and north parte thereof, and havinge a chimney in it, and thother of them lieinge over parte of the foresaid entrey or voyde rome next the foresaid Pipe Office, together with the stayres leadinge from the foresaid romes in thoccupacion of the foresaid Charles Bradshawe upp unto the foresaid two romes in thoccupacyon of the said Edward Merry ; and also all that lytle rome now used to laye woode and coles in, being aboute the midle of the said stayers westwardes, which said litle rome laste mencyoned is over the foresaid buttrey nowe in thoccupacyon of the sayd Charles Bradshawe, and is now in thoccupacyon of the said Charles Bradshawe ; and also all that rome or garrett lyeinge and beinge over the said twoo romes or loftes laste before mencyoned in thoccupacyon of the said Edward Merry, together with the dore, entrye, void grounde, waye and passage and stayres leadinge or used to, with or from the said romes in thoccupacyon of the said Edward Merry up unto the said rome or garrett over the said twoo romes in thoccupacyon of the said Edward Merrie ; and also all those twoo lower romes, now in thoccupacyon of the said Peter Johnson, lyinge directlye under parte of the said seaven greate upper romes ; and also all those twoo other lower romes or chambers nowe beinge also in the tenure or occupacion of the said Peter Johnson, being under the foresaid romes or chambers in thoccupacyon of the said Charles Bradshawe ; and also the dore, entry, waye, voyd grounde and passage leadinge and used to and from the said greate yard next the said Pipe Office into and from the said fouer lower romes or chambers ; and also all that litle yard adjoyneinge to the said lower romes as the same is nowe enclosed with a bricke wall, and nowe beinge in thoccupacyon of the said Peter Johnson, which said foure lower romes or chambers and litle yard doe lye betwene the said greate yard nexte the sayd Pipe Office on the north parte, and an entery leadinge into the messuage which Margaret Pooley, widdow, holdeth for terme of her lyefe, nowe in the occupacyon of the said John Favor, on the west parte, and a wall devidinge the said yard now in thoccupacyon of the said Peter Johnson and the yard nowe in thoccupacion of the said John Favor on the south parte ; and also the stayres and staire-case leadinge from the said litle yard nowe in thoccupacyon of the sayde Peter Johnson up unto the foresaid chambers or romes nowe in thoccupacyon of the said Charles Bradshawe ; and alsoe all that litle yard or peice of void grounde,

with the bricke wall thereunto belongeinge, lyeinge and beinge nexte the Queenes highewaye leadinge unto the ryver of Thamis, wherein an old privy nowe standeth, as the same is nowe enclosed with the same bricke wall and with a pale, next adjoyneinge to the house of the said Sir William More, nowe in thoccupacyon of the right honorable the Lord Cobham, on the east parte, and the streete leadinge to the Thamys there on the west parte, and the said yarde nexte the said Pipe Office on the south parte, and the house of the saide Lorde Cobham on the north parte,—All which premisses before in theis presentes mencyoned to be hereby bargayned and sold are scituate, lyeinge and beinge, within the saide prescincte of the said late Blackfryers Preachers; together also with all libertyes, priveledges, lightes, watercourses, easementes, commodities and appurtenaunces to the foresaid romes, lodginges and other the premisses before in theis presentes mencyoned to be hereby bargained and sold belongeinge or in any wyse apperteyninge. And also the sayd Sir William More, for the consyderacyon aforesayd, hath bargayned, sold, alyened, enfeoffed and confirmed, and by theis presentes doth bargayne, sell, alyen, enfeoffe and confirme unto the said James Burbage, his heires and assignes for ever, free and quiett ingres, egres and regres, to and from the streete or waye leadeing from Ludgate unto the Thamys over, uppon and thoroughe, the same greate yarde next the said Pipe Office by the wayes nowe thereunto used into and from the sayde seaven greate upper romes, and all other the premisses before in and by theis presentes mencyoned to be bargayned and sold, and to and from every or any parte or parcell thereof, together alsoe with free libertye for the said James Burbage, his heires and assignes, to laye and discharge his and their wood, cole and all other carriages, necessaries and provisions, in the same greate yarde laste before mencyoned for conveniente tyme, untill the same maye be taken and carried awaie from thence unto the premisses before by theis presentes mencyoned to be bargayned and sold, and so from tyme to tyme and at all tymes hereafter the sayd James Burbage, his heyres and assignes, leavinge convenyent waies and passages to goe and come in, uppon and throughe, the said greate yarde from tyme to tyme to and from the said Pipe Office, and to and from the garden and other houses and romes of the said Sir William More not hereby bargayned and sold out of the streete leadeinge to the said ryver of Thamys, so that the said wood, cole, carriages and provisyons so layed and discharged in the said yarde last mencyoned by the said James, his heyres or assignes, be removed and avoided out of and from the said yarde within three dayes next after it shal be broughte thither, without fraude or further delaye. And further, the said Sir William More, for the consideracion aforesaid, doth by theis presentes graunte, bargayne and sell, unto the said James Burbage, his heyres and assignes, for ever, the revercyon and revercyons, remainder and remainders, of all and singuler the premisses before by theis presentes mencyoned to be heareby bargained and sold, and every parte and parcell thereof, excepte and reserved unto the said Sir William More, his heyres and assignes, one rome or stole as the same is now made in and out of the foresaide wall nexte the said entrey adjoyneinge to the said Pipe Office into the foresaid vault. All which said seaven greate upper romes, and all other the premisses with thappurtenaunces above by theis presentes mencyoned to be bargayned and sold, amonge others Sir Thomas Cawarden, knighte, deceased, late had to him, his heyres and assignes, for ever, of the guifte and graunte of the late Kinge of famous memorie Edwarde the Sixte, late Kinge of England, as in and by his letters Patentes under the Greate Seale of Englande, beareinge date at Westminster the twelveth daye of Marche, in the fourth yeare of his raigne, more at lardge appeareth; and all which said premisses above by theis presentes mencyoned to be bargayned and sold, the said Sir Thomas Cawarden, in and by his last will and testamente in writing, beareinge date in the daye of St. Barthilmew the appostle in the yeare of our Lord God, 1559, amonges other thinges dyd will and declare his intente to be that his executors, with the consente of his overseers, should have full

power and aucthoritye to bargaine sell and alyen for the performance of his said last will and testamente ; and also in and by the same his said laste will and testamente dyd ordeyne and make dame Elizabeth his then wyef and the said Sir William More, by the name of William More of Loseley, in the county of Surrey, esquier, executors of his said last will and testamente, and Thomas Blagrave and Thomas Hawe overseers of the same, as in and by his said last will and testament more at large appereth; and all which premisses above mencyoned to be hereby bargayned and sold, amonges others, the said Dame Elizabeth Cawarden and William More, executors of the said laste will and testament, by and with thassent, consent, agreement and advise, of the said Thomas Hawe and Thomas Blagrave, overseers of the said last will, in accomplyshment thereof dyd bargayne and sell unto John Byrche, gentleman, John Awsten and Richard Chapman, and their heyres for ever, as in and by their deed indented of bargaine and sale thereof made, beareinge date the twentith day of December in the second yere of the raigne of our said soveraigne lady the Queenes Majestie that nowe is, and enrolled in her Majesties High Courte of Chauncerie more at lardge appeareth; and all which said premisses with thappurtenaunces above mencioned to be hereby bargayned and sold amonges others, the said John Birche, John Awsten, and Richard Chapman, did by their deed indented of bargaine and sale, beareinge date the twoo and twentith daie of December in the said second yere of the raigne of our said Soveraigne lady the Queenes Majestye that nowe is, bargaine and sell to the said Dame Elizabeth Cawarden and Sir William More and their heires for ever, as in and by the same deed indented of bargaine and sale last above recited, and also enrolled in her Majesties said Highe Courte of Chancery, more at lardge also appeareth ; which said Dame Elizabeth is longe sithence deceased, by reason whereof all and singuler the same premisses, in and by theis presentes mencyoned to be hereby bargayned and sold, are accrued and come unto the said Sir William More and his heires by righte of survivorshippe ; To have and to hold all the said romes, lodginges, cellers, vaultes, stayres, yardes, waies, and all and singuler other the premisses, with all and singuler their appurtenaunces before in theis presentes mencyoned to be hereby bargained and sold, excepte before excepted, to the said James Burbage his heires and assignes for ever, to the onelye use and behoofe of the said James Burbage his heires and assignes for evermore. And the said Sir William More doth covenaunte and graunte for himself, his heires, executors and administrators, to and with the said James Burbage, his heires and assignes, by theis presentes, that he, the said Sir William More, is and standeth, at the tyme of thensealinge and deliverye of theis presentes, lawfully and absolutelye seysed of the sayd romes, lodginges, yardes, and of all and singuler other the premisses in and by these presentes mencyoned to be bargayned and sold, in his demeasne as of fee simple, and that the sayd romes, lodginges, cellers, vaultes, stayres, yardes, and all and singuler other the premisses before in and by these presentes mencyoned to be hereby bargayned and sold, excepte before excepted, the daye of the date heareof are and at all tymes, and from tyme to tyme for ever hereafter, shall stande, contynue and remayne to the said James Burbage, his heyres and assignes, for ever, cleirely acquited, exonerated and dischardged, or els by the said Sir William More, his heyres, or assignes, uppon reasonable requeste thereof to him or them made by the sayd James Burbage, his heyres or assignes, sufficyently saved or kepte harmeles of and from all former bargaynes, sales, guiftes, grauntes, joynctures, dowers, leases, estates, anuytyes, rentes-chardge, arrerages of rentes, statutes merchaunte and of the staple, recognizaunces, judgmentes, execucyons, yssues, fees, fynes, amercyamentes, and of and from all other chardges, tytles, troubles and incumberaunces whatsoever had, made, comitted or done by the sayd Sir William More and by the foresaid Sir Thomas Cawarden, knighte, deceased, or by eyther of them, or by any other person or persons, by, with or under, their or any of their estate, righte, tytle, assente, consente, acte, meanes or procuremente. And alsoe that he, the sayde James

Burbage, his heyres and assignes, shall or maye from henceforthe for ever peacebly and quietlye have, hold, occupye, possesse, enjoye and keepe, all the sayd romes, lodginges, cellers, yardes, and all and singuler other the premisses, with the appurtenaunces, before by these presentes mencyoned to be hereby bargayned and sould, and every parte and parcell thereof, excepte above excepted, without any lett, troble, vexacyon, eviccyon, recoverye, interupcyon or contradiccion of the sayd Sir William More his heyres or assignes, or of any of them, and without any lawfull lett, troble, vexacyon, eviccion, recoverye or interrupcyon of any other person or persons whatsoever lawefullye haveinge or claymeinge, or which heareafter shall lawefully have or clayme, any estate, righte, tytle or interest in or to the said romes, lodginges, and all other the premisses before by these presentes mencyoned to be bargayned and sold, or in or to any parte or parcell thereof, by, from or under, the sayd Sir William More and Sir Thomas Cawarden, or any of them, or their or either of their estate, righte, tytle or interest. And the said Sir William More dothe alsoe covenaunte and graunte, for himselfe, his heyres, executors and assignes, to and with the said James Burbage, his heyres and assignes, by these presentes, that he the said Sir William More and his heyres shall and will from tyme to tyme, duringe the space and terme of three yeres next ensueinge after the date heareof, at or uppon reasonable requeste thereof to him or them or any of them to be made by the said James Burbage, his heyres or assignes or any of them, well and truelye doe knowledge, execute, cause and suffer to be made, done and executed, all and every such further acte and actes, thinge and thinges, devise and devises, assuraunce and assurances, in the lawe whatsoever for the further and more better assurance, suertye and more suer makeinge, of the sayd romes, lodginges and all other the premisses with the appurtenaunces before in these presentes mencyoned to be hereby bargayned and sold unto the sayd James Burbage, his heyres and assignes for ever, to thonlye use and behoofe of the sayd James Burbage his heyres and assignes for evermore, be it by deed or deedes indented or inrolled, or not inrolled, thinrollment of theis presentes, fyne, feoffement, recoverye with single or double voucher, releas, confirmacion or otherwise, with warrantie onelye of the sayd Sir William More and his heyres againste him the sayd Sir William More and his heires, or all or as many of theis wayes or meanes or any other, as by the said James Burbage, his heyres or assignes or any of them, or by his or their or any of their learned counsell in the lawe, shal be reasonably advised or devised and required, at thonely costes and chardges in the lawe of the sayd James Burbage, his heyres or assignes, so as the same assurance or assuraunces in forme aforesaid, to be had and made by the sayd Sir William More or his heyres, to the said James Burbage his heyres or assigns, doe not comprehend in them or any of them any furder or greater warrantie then onely againste the said Sir William More and his heyres, and the heyres of the sayd Sir Thomas Cawarden; and so as the sayd Sir William More and his heyres, or any of them, be not compelled to travell in person any furder then to the cittyes of London and Westminster, or any of them, for the makeinge, knowledginge or executeinge, of the sayd assurances in forme aforesaid to be had or made. And furthermore the sayd Sir William More doth by theis presentes aucthorize, nominate and appointe, George Austen, gentleman, and Henrye Smyth, merchantaylor, to be his lawefull deputyes and attorneys joynctly and severallye for him and in his name to enter into all the sayd romes, lodginges, cellers, and other the premisses before in theis presentes mencyoned to be hereby bargayned and sold, and into every parte thereof, and peaceable possession and seazen thereof for him and in his name to take, and after such possessyon and season thereof so had and taken, to delyver possessyon and seazon thereof, and of every parte thereof, unto the sayd James Burbage, his heires and assignes, accordinge to the purporte, effecte, true intente and meaninge of theis presentes; and all and whatsoever his said attorneys, or either of them, shall by vertue of theis presentes doe or cause to be done in his name in execucion of the premisses, he the sayd Sir William More and his heyres shall and will

ratifye, confirme and allowe, by theis presentes. In witnes whereof the partyes firste above named to theis indentures sonderlye have sett their seales the daye and yeare firste above written.

II. A Petition to the Privy Council from the inhabitants of the Blackfriars, November, 1596, against the theatre which was then about to be established by Burbage in that locality. From the State Papers, Domest. Eliz., cclx. 116. This manuscript is not the original Petition, but an undated copy of it made in or about the year 1631, as is ascertained by a comparison of the handwriting with that in transcripts of other documents in the State Papers, Dom. Char. I., ccv. 32. The date of the original is shown by the Order of 1619 given hereafter.

To the right honorable the Lords and others of her Majesties most honorable Privy Councell,—Humbly shewing and beseeching your honors, the inhabitants of the precinct of the Blackfryers, London, that whereas one Burbage hath lately bought certaine roomes in the same precinct neere adjoyning unto the dwelling houses of the right honorable the Lord Chamberlaine and the Lord of Hunsdon, which romes the said Burbage is now altering and meaneth very shortly to convert and turne the same into a comon playhouse, which will grow to be a very great annoyance and trouble, not only to all the noblemen and gentlemen thereabout inhabiting but allso a generall inconvenience to all the inhabitants of the same precinct, both by reason of the great resort and gathering togeather of all manner of vagrant and lewde persons that, under cullor of resorting to the playes, will come thither and worke all manner of mischeefe, and allso to the greate pestring and filling up of the same precinct, yf it should please God to send any visitation of sicknesse as heretofore hath been, for that the same precinct is allready growne very populous ; and besides, that the same playhouse is so neere the Church that the noyse of the drummes and trumpetts will greatly disturbe and hinder both the ministers and parishioners in tyme of devine service and sermons ;—In tender consideracion wherof, as allso for that there hath not at any tyme heretofore been used any comon playhouse within the same precinct, but that now all players being banished by the Lord Mayor from playing within the Cittie by reason of the great inconveniences and ill rule that followeth them, they now thincke to plant themselves in liberties ;—That therfore it would please your honors to take order that the same roomes may be converted to some other use, and that no playhouse may be used or kept there ; and your suppliants as most bounden shall and will dayly pray for your Lordships in all honor and happines long to live. Elizabeth Russell, dowager ; G. Hunsdon ; Henry Bowes : Thomas Browne ; John Crooke ; William Meredith ; Stephen Egerton ; Richard Lee ; . . . Smith ; William Paddy ; William de Lavine ; Francis Hinson ; John Edwards ; Andrew Lyons ; Thomas Nayle ; Owen Lochard ; John Robbinson ; Thomas Homes ; Richard Feild ; William Watts ; Henry Boice ; Edward Ley ; John Clarke ; William Bispham ; Robert Baheire ; Ezechiell Major ; Harman Buckholt ; John Le Mere ; John Dollin ; Ascanio de Renialmire ; John Wharton.

III. Contract between Henslowe and Allen, on the one Part, and Peter Street, Carpenter, on the other Part, for the erection by the latter of the Fortune Theatre near Golden Lane, January 8th, 1599-1600. From the original preserved at Dulwich College, being the one executed by Street in a monogram of his initials, and endorsed,—"Peater Streat, for the building of the Fortune." This document incidentally reveals to some extent the nature of the construction of the Globe Theatre.

This Indenture made the eighte daie of Januarye, 1599, and in the twoe and fortyth yeare of the reigne of our sovereigne ladie Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queene of England, Fraunce and Irelande, defender of the faythe, &c., betwene Phillipp Henslowe and Edwarde Allen of the parishe of Sainte Saviours in Southwark, in the

countie of Surrey, gentlemen, on th'one parte, and Peeter Streete cittizein and carpenter of London, on th'other parte,—Witnesseth that, whereas the saide Phillipp Henslowe and Edward Allen the daie of the date hereof have bargayned, compounded and agreed with the saide Peter Streete for the erectinge, buildinge, and settinge upp of a newe howse and stadge for a plaie-howse, in and uppon a certeine plott or parcell of grounde appoynted oute for that purpose, scytuate and beinge nere Goldinge Lane in the parishe of Sainte Giles withoute Cripplegate of London; to be by him the saide Peeter Streete, or somme other sufficyent woorkmen of his provideinge and appoyntemente, and att his propper costes and chardges, for the consideracion hereafter in theis presentes expressed, made, erected, builded and sett upp, in manner and forme followeinge; that is to saie, the frame of the saide howse to be sett square, and to conteine fowerscore foote of lawfull assize everye waie square withoute, and fiftie five foote of like assize square everye waie within, with a good, suer, and stronge foundacion of pyles, brick, lyme, and sand, bothe withoute and within, to be wroughte one foote of assize att the leiste above the grounde; and the saide frame to conteine three stories in heighth, the first or lower storie to conteine twelve foote of lawfull assize in heighth, the seconde storie eleaven foote of lawfull assize in heigth, and the third or upper storie to conteine nyne foote of lawfull assize in height. All which stories shall conteine twelve foote and a half of lawfull assize in breadth throughcoute, besides a juttey forwardes in eyther of the saide twoe upper stories of tenne ynches of lawfull assize; with fower convenient divisions for gentlemens roomes, and other sufficient and convenient divisions for twoe-pennie roomes; with necessarie seates to be placed and sett as well in those roomes as throughcoute all the rest of the galleries of the saide howse; and with suche like steares, conveyances, and divisions, withoute and within, as are made and contryved in and to the late erected plaie-howse on the Banck, in the saide parishe of Sainte Saviours, called the Globe; with a stadge and tyreinge-howse to be made, erected and sett upp within the saide frame; with a shadowe or cover over the saide stadge; which stadge shal be placed and sett, as alsoe the stearecases of the saide frame, in suche sorte as is prefigured in a plott thereof drawen; and which stadge shall conteine in length fortie and three foote of lawfull assize, and in breadth to extende to the middle of the yarde of the saide howse; the same stadge to be paled in belowe with good stronge and sufficyent newe oken bourdes, and likewise the lower storie of the saide frame withinside, and the same lower storie to be alsoe laide over and fenced with stronge yron pykes; and the saide stadge to be in all other proporcions contryved and fashioned like unto the stadge of the saide plaie-howse called the Globe; with convenient windowes and lightes glazed to the saide tyreinge-howse. And the saide frame, stadge, and stearecases to be covered with tyle, and to have a sufficient gutter of lead, to carrie and convey the water frome the coveringe of the saide stadge, to fall backwardes. And alsoe all the saide frame and the stairecases thereof to be sufficyently enclosed withoute with lathe, lyme and haire. And the gentlemens roomes and twoe-pennie roomes to be seeled with lathe, lyme and haire; and all the flowers of the saide galleries, stories and stadge to be bourded with good and sufficyent newe deale bourdes of the whole thicknes, wheare neede shal be. And the saide howse, and other thinges before mencioned to be made and doen, to be in all other contrivitions, conveyances, fashions, thinge and thinges, effected, finished and doen, accordinge to the manner and fashion of the saide howse called the Globe; saveinge only that all the princypall and maine postes of the saide frame, and stadge forwarde, shal be square and wroughte palaster-wise, with carved proporcions called satiers to be placed and sett on the topp of every of the same postes; and saveinge alsoe that the saide Peter Streete shall not be chardged with anie manner of paynteinge in or aboute the saide frame, howse, or stadge, or anie parte thereof, nor rendringe the walls within, nor seelinge anie more or other roomes then the gentlemens roomes, twoe-pennie roomes and stadge, before remembred. Nowe theereuppon the

saide Peeter Streete dothe covenaunte, promise and graunte for himself, his executors and administrators, to and with the saide Phillipp Henslowe and Edward Allen, and either of them, and the'xecutors and administrators of them, and either of them, by theis presentes, in manner and forme followeinge, that is to saie: that he the saide Peeter Streete, his executors or assignes, shall and will, at his or their owne propper costes and chardges, well, woorkmanlike and substancyallie make, erect, sett upp and fully finishe in and by all thinges, accordinge to the true meaninge of theis presentes, with good, stronge and substancyall newe tymber and other necessarie stuff, all the saide frame and other woorkes whatsoever in and uppon the saide plott or parcell of grounde, beinge not by anie aucthoretie restrayned, and haveinge ingres, egres and regres to doe the same, before the fyve and twentith daie of Julie next commeinge after the date hereof; and shall alsoe, att his or theire like costes and chardges, provide and finde all manner of woorkemen, tymber, joystes, rafters, boordes, dores, boltes, hinges, brick, tyle, lathe, lyme, haire, sande, nailes, leede, iron, glasse, woorkmanshipp and other thinges whatsoever, which shal be needeful, convenyent and necessarie for the saide frame and woorkes and everie parte thereof; and shall alsoe make all the saide frame in every poynte for scantlinges lardger and bigger in assize then the scantlinges of the timber of the saide newe erected howse called the Globe. And alsoe that he the saide Peeter Streete shall furthwith, as well by himself as by suche other and soe manie woorkmen as shal be convenient and necessarie, enter into and uppon the saide buildinges and woorkes, and shall in reasonable manner proceede therein, withoute anie wilfull detraccion, untill the same shal be fully effected and finished. In consideracion of all which buildinges, and of all stuff and woorkemanshipp thereto belonginge, the saide Phillipp Henslowe and Edwarde Allen, and either of them, for themselves, theire and either of theire executors and administrators, doe joynctlie and severallie covenaunte and graunte to and with the saide Peeter Streete, his executors and administrators, by theis presentes, that they, the saide Phillipp Henslowe and Edward Allen, or one of them or the executors, administrators or assignes of them or one of them, shall and will well and truelie paie or cawse to be paide unto the saide Peeter Streete, his executors or assignes, att the place aforesaid appoynted for the erectinge of the saide frame, the full somme of fower hundred and fortie poundes of lawfull money of Englande, in manner and forme followeinge; that is to saie, att suche tyme and whenas the tymber woork of the saide frame shal be raysed and sett upp by the saide Peeter Streete, his executors or assignes, or within seaven daies then next followeinge, twoe hundred and twentie poundes: and att suche time and whenas the saide frame and woorkes shal be fullie effected and fynished as is aforesaide, or within seaven daies then next followeinge, th'other twoe hundred and twentie poundes, withoute fraude or coven. Provided allwaies, and it is agreed betwene the saide parties, that whatsoever somme or sommes of money the saide Phillipp Henslowe and Edward Allen, or either of them, or the executors or assignes of them or either of them, shall lend or deliver unto the saide Peter Streete, his executors or assignes, or anie other by his appoyntemente or consent, for or concerninge the saide woorkes or anie parte thereof, or anie stuff thereto belonginge, before the raizeinge and settinge upp of the saide frame, shal be reputed, accepted, taken and accoumpted in parte of the firste paymente aforesaid of the saide somme of fower hundred and fortie poundes; and all suche somme and sommes of money as they, or anie of them, shall as aforesaid lend or deliver betwene the razeinge of the saide frame and finishinge thereof, and of all the rest of the saide woorkes, shal be reputed, accepted, taken and accoumpted in parte of the laste paymente aforesaid of the same somme of fower hundred and fortie poundes; anie thinge above-said to the contrary notwithstandinge. In witnes whereof the parties above-said to theis present presente indentures interchaungeably have sett theire handes and seales. Yeoven the daie and yeare firste above-written.

IV. An Order of the Lords of the Privy Council "for the restrainte of the imoderate use and Companye of Playehowses and Players," June 22nd, 1600. From the original Register of the Privy Council. There is another transcript of this Order preserved in the archives of the City of London. In the latter copy the word too *is in the place of* so *in the second line of the third paragraph. This is the only variation worthy of notice.*

Whereas divers complaintes have bin heretofore made unto the Lordes and others of her Majesties Privye Counsell of the manyfolde abuses and disorders that have growen and do contynue by occasion of many houses erected and employed in and about the cittie of London for common stage-playes, and now verie latelie by reason of some complainte exhibited by sundry persons againste the buyldinge of the like house in or near Golding-lane by one Edward Allen, a servant of the right honorable the Lord Admyrall, the matter as well in generaltie touchinge all the saide houses for stage-playes and the use of playinge, as in particular concerninge the saide house now in hand to be buylte in or neare Goldinge-lane, hath bin broughte into question and consultacion amonge their Lordships; forasmuch as it is manifestly knowen and graunted that the multitude of the saide houses and the mys-government of them hath bin and is dayly occasion of the ydle, ryotous and dissolute living of great nombers of people, that, leavinge all such honest and painefull course of life as they should followe, doe meete and assemble there, and of many particular abuses and disorders that doe thereupon ensue; and yet, nevertheles, it is considered that the use and exercise of such playes, not beinge evill in ytself, may with a good order and moderacion be suffered in a well-governed state, and that her Majestie, beinge pleased at somtymes to take delight and recreation in the sight and hearinge of them, some order is fitt to be taken for the allowance and mayntenaunce of such persons as are thought meetest in that kinde to yealde her Majestie recreation and delighte, and consequently of the houses that must serve for publike playinge to keepe them in exercise. To the ende, therefore, that both the greate abuses of the playes and playinge-houses may be redressed, and yet the aforesaide use and moderation of them retayned, the Lordes and the reste of her Majesties Privie Counsell, with one and full consent, have ordered in manner and forme as followeth,—

Firste,—that there shal be aboute the Cittie two houses and no more allowed to serve for the use of the common stage-playes, of the which houses one shal be in Surrey in that place which is commonly called the Banckeside or theraboutes, and the other in Middlesex. And forasmuch as their Lordships have bin enformed by Edmund Tylney, Esqr., her Majesties servante and Master of the Revells, that the house nowe in hand to be builte by the saide Edward Allen is not intended to encrease the nomber of the playhouses, but to be insteede of another, namely the Curtayne, which is ether to be ruyned and plucked downe or to be put to some other good use, as also that the scytuation thereof is meete and convenient for that purpose, it is likewise ordered that the saide house of Allen shal be allowed to be one of the two houses and namely for the house to be allowed in Middlesex for the company of players belonging to the Lord Admirall, so as the house called the Curtaine be, as it is pretended, either ruynated or applyed to some other good use. And for the other house allowed to be on Surrey side, whereas their Lordships are pleased to permitt to the company of players that shall play there to make their owne choice which they will have of divers houses that are there, choosing one of them and no more, and the said company of plaiers, being the servantes of the Lord Chamberlain, that are to play there, have made choise of the house called the Globe, it is ordered that the saide house and none other shal be there allowed; and especially it is forbidden that any stage-playes shal be played, as sometymes they have bin, in any common inne for publique assembly in or neare aboute the Cittie.

Secondly,—forasmuch as these stage-plaies, by the multitude of houses and company of players, have bin so frequent, not servinge for recreation but invitinge and callinge

the people dayly from their trade and worke to myspend their tyme, it is likewise ordered that the two severall companies of players assigned unto the two houses allowed may play each of them in their severall house twice a weeke and no oftener, and especially they shall refrayne to play on the Sabbath-day upon paine of impryson-ment and further penaltie ; and that they shall forbeare altogether in the tyme of Lent, and likewise at such tyme and tymes as any extraordinary sicknes or infection of disease shall appeare to be in or about the cittie.

Thirdly,—because these orders wil be of little force and effecte unlesse they be duely putt in execution by those unto whome it appertayneth to see them executed, it is ordered that severall copies of these orders shal be sent to the Lord Maior of London and to the Justices of the Peace of the counties of Middlesex and Surrey, and that lettres shal be written unto them from their Lordships straightly charginge them to see to the execucion of the same, as well by commyttinge to prison any owners of play-houses and players as shall disobey and resist these orders as by any other good and lawfull meanes that in their discretion they shall finde expedient, and to certifie their Lordships from tyme to tyme as they shall see cause of their proceedinges heerein.

V. The Letter from the Lords of the Privy Council to the Justices of the Peace for the County of Surrey, June 22nd, 1600, referred to in the preceding Order. From the original Register of the Privy Council.

By occasion of some complaintes that of late have bin made unto us of the multi-tude of houses servinge for common stage-playes in and aboute the Cittie of London, and of the greate abuses and disorders growen by the overmuch haunte and resorte of many licentious people unto those houses and places, we have entred into considera-cion of some fitt course to be taken for redresse of the saide disorders by suppressing dyvers of those houses, and by some restrainte of the imoderate use of the plaies, for which cause wee have sett downe certaine orders to be duely henceforth observed and kept, a copy whereof we sende yow here inclosed, and have sent the like to the Lord Maior of London and to the Justices of the Peace of Middlesex ; but as wee have done our partes in prescribinge the orders, so, unlesse yow perfourme yours in lookinge to the due execution of them, we shall loose our labor, and the wante of redresse must be imputed unto yow and others unto whome it apperteyneth ; and, therefore, wee doe hereby authorize and require you to see the saide orders to be putt in execucion and to be continued, as yow do wish the amendement of the aforesaide abuses and will remove the blame thereof from yourselves.

VI. A Letter from the Lords of the Council to the Lord Mayor of London in reply to a complaint made by the latter of the number of playhouses, 31 December, 1601. From the Privy Council Register.

Wee have receaved a lettre from yow renewing a complaint of the great abuse and disorder within and about the cittie of London by reason of the multitude of play-howses, and the inordinate resort and concourse of dissolute and idle people daielie unto publique stage-plaies ; for the which information, as wee do commende your Lordship because it betokeneth your care and desire to reforme the disorders of the Cittie, so wee must lett yow know that wee did muche rather expect to understand that our order sett downe and prescribed about a yeare and a half since, for reformation of the said disorders upon the like complaint at that tyme, had bin duelie executed, then to finde the same disorders and abuses so muche encreased as they are. The blame whereof, as wee cannot but impute in great part to the Justices of the Peace or some of them in the counties of Middlesex and Surrey, who had speciall direction and charge from us to see our said Order executed for the confines of the Cittie, wherein the most part of those play-howses are scituate, so wee do wishe that it might appeare unto us that any thing hath bin endeavoured by the predecessors of yow the Lord Maior, and by

yow, the Aldermen, for the redresse of the said enormities and for observation and execution of our said Order within the Cittie. Wee do therefore once againe renew hereby our direction unto yow, as wee have donne by our lettres to the justices of Middlesex and Surrey, concerninge the observation of our former Order, which wee do praie and require yow to cause duelie and dilligentlie to be put in execution for all poyntes thereof, and especiallie for the expresse and streight prohibition of any more playhowses then those two that are mentioned and allowed in the said Order; charging and streightlie commanding all suche persons as are the owners of any the howses used for stage-plaies within the Cittie not to permitt any more publique plaies to be used, exercised or shewed, from hencefoorth in their said howses, and to take bondes of them, if yow shall finde it needeful, for the perfourmaunce thereof; or if they shall refuse to enter into bonde or to observe our said Order, then to committ them to prison untill they shall conforme themselves thereunto. And so praying yow, as yourself do make the complaint and finde the enormitie, so to applie your best endeavour to the remedie of the abuse, wee bidd, &c.

VII. A Letter from the Lords of the Council to the Magistrates of Surrey and Middlesex, severely censuring them for not having enforced the Order of June, 1600, and desiring them to amend their negligence without delay. From the Privy Council Register, 31 December, 1601.

Two lettres of one tenour to the Justices of Middlesex and Surrey. It is in vaine for us to take knowledg of great abuses and disorders complayned of and to give order for redresse, if our directions finde no better execution and observation then it seemeth they do, and wee must needes impute the fault and blame thereof to yow or some of yow, the Justices of the Peace, that are put in trust to see them executed and perfourmed; whereof wee may give yow a plaine instance in the great abuse contynued or rather encreased in the multitude of plaie-howses and stage-plaies in and about the cittie of London. For whereas about a yeare and a half since, upon knowledge taken of the great enormities and disorders by the over-much frequentinge of plaies, wee did carefullie sett downe and prescribe an order to be observed concerninge the number of play-howses and the use and exercise of stage-plaies, with lymytacion of tymes and places for the same, namely, that there should be but two howses allowed for that use, one in Middlesex called the Fortune and the other in Surrey called the Globe, and the same with observacion of certaine daies and times, as in the said order is particularly expressed, in such sorte as a moderate practice of them for honest recreation might be contynued and yet the inordinate concourse of dissolute and idle people be restrayned; wee do now understande that our said order hath bin so farr from taking dew effect, as, insteede of restrainte and redresse of the former disorders, the multitude of play-howses is much encreased, and that no daie passeth over without many stage-plaies in one place or other within and about the Cittie publiquelie made; the default of perfourmance of which our said order we must in greate parte the rather impute to the Justices of the Peace, because at the same tyme wee gave earnest direction unto yow to see it streightly executed and to certifie us of the execution, and yet we have neither understoode of any redresse made by yow, nor receaved any certificate at all of your proceedinges therein, which default or omission wee do now pray and require you forthwith to amende, and to cause our said former order to be putt duely in execution; and especiallie to call before you the owners of all the other play-howses, excepting the two howses in Middlesex and Surrey aforementioned, and to take good and sufficient bondes of them not to exercise, use or practise, nor to suffer from henceforth to be exercised, used or practized, any stage-playinge in their howses, and, if they shall refuse to enter into such bondes, then to comitt them to prison untill they shall conforme themselves. And so, &c.

VIII. A Letter from the Lords of the Council to the Lord Mayor of London and the Magistrates of Surrey and Middlesex, desiring them to sanction performances at the Globe, Fortune and Curtain Theatres, April, 1604. From a contemporary transcript preserved at Dulwich College.

After our hartie . . . Wheras the Kings Majesties Plaiers have given . . . highnes good service in ther quallitie of playinge, and for as much lickwise as they are at all times to be emploied in that service whensoever they shal be commaunded, we thinke it therfore fitt, the time of Lent being now past, that your Lordship doe permitt and suffer the three companies of plaiers to the King, Queene and Prince, publicklie to exercise ther plaies in ther severall and usuall howses for that purpose and noe other; viz., the Globe scituate in Maiden Lane on the Banckside in the countie of Surrey, the Fortune in Goldinge Lane, and the Curtaine in Hollywelle in the cowntie of Midlesex, without any lett or interrupption in respect of any former Lettres of Prohibition heertofore written by us to your Lordship, except ther shall happen weeklie to die of the plague above the number of thirtie within the Cittie of London and the Liberties therof, att which time wee thinke itt fitt they shall cease and forbeare any further publicklie to playe untill the sicknes be againe decreaced to the saide number; and so we bid your Lordship hartilie farewell. From the Court at Whitehalle, the ix.th of Aprill, 1604.—Your very loving Frends,—Nottingham; Suffolk; Gill: Shrowsberie; Ed: Worster; W. Knowles; J. Stanhopp.

To our verie good L. the Lord Maior of the Cittie of London, and to the Justices of the Peace of the Counties of Middlesex and Surrey.

IX. "A Sonnett upon the pittifull burneing of the Globe playhowse in London." First printed by Haslewood, under his customary pseudonym, in the Gentleman's Magazine, 1816, and there said to have been "copied from an old manuscript volume of poems." Doubts having been suggested respecting the genuineness of this poem, it is important to state that the present edition of it is taken from a manuscript of the early part of the seventeenth century, of unquestionable authenticity, preserved in the library of Sir Mathew Wilson, Bart., of Eshton Hall, co. York.

Now sitt the downe, Melpomene, = Wrapt in a sea-cole robe,
And tell the dolefull tragedie, = That late was playd at Globe;
For noe man that can singe and saye
Was scard on St. Peters daye.
Oh sorrow, pittifull sorrow, and yett all this is true.

All yow that please to understand, = Come listen to my storye,
To see Death with his rakeing brand = Mongst such an auditorye;
Regarding neither Cardinalls might,
Nor yett the rugged face of Henry the eight.—Oh sorrow, &c.

This fearfull fire beganne above, = A wonder strange and true,
And to the stage-howse did remove, = As round as taylors clewe;
And burnt downe both beame and snagg,
And did not spare the silken flagg.—Oh sorrow, &c.

Out runne the knightes, out runne the lordes, = And there was great adoe;
Some lost their hattes, and some their swordes; = Then out runne Burbidge too;
The reprobates, thoughe druncke on munday,
Prayd for the Foole and Henry Condye.—Oh sorrow, &c.

The perrywigges and drumme-heades frye, = Like to a butter firkin;
A wofull burneing did betide = To many a good buffe jerkin.

Then with swolne eyes, like druncken Flemminges,
Distressed stood old stuttering Heminges.—Oh sorrow, &c.

Noe shower his raine did there downe force = In all that sunn-shine weather,
To save that great renowned howse ; = Nor thou, O ale-howse, neither.
Had itt begunne belowe, sans doubte,
Their wives for feare . . . . . .—Oh sorrow, &c.

Bee warned, yow stage-strutters all, = Least yow againe be catched,
And such a burneing doe befall, = As to them whose howse was thatched ;
Forbeare your whoreing, breeding biles,
And laye up that expence for tiles.—Oh sorrow, &c.

Goe drawe yow a petition, = And doe yow not abhorr itt,
And gett, with low submission, = A licence to begg for itt
In churches, sans churchwardens checkes,
In Surrey and in Midlesex.
Oh sorrow, pittifull sorrow, and yett all this is true.

X. An Order by the Corporation of the City of London, dated January 21st, 1618-19, for the suppression of the Blackfriars Theatre. From the original entry recording the proceedings of that day in a manuscript preserved in the City archives. There is an early copy of this Order amongst the State Papers, Dom. Char. I., ccv. 32, which reads in the sixth line,—"and that thereuppon their honnors."

Item, this day was exhibited to this Court a peticion by the constables and other officers and inhabitantes within the precinct of Blackfryers, London, therein declaring that in November, 1596, divers honorable persons and others, then inhabiting in the said precinct, made knowne to the Lordes and others of the Privy Councell what inconveniences were likely to fall upon them by a common playhowse then preparing to be erected there, and that their honors then forbad the use of the said howse for playes, and in June, 1600, made certaine orders by which, for many weightie reasons therein expressed, it is limitted there should be only two playhowses tolerated, whereof the one to be on the Banckside, and the other in or neare Golding Lane, exempting thereby the Blackfryers ; and that a lettre was then directed from their Lordships to the Lord Maior and Justices, strictly requiringe of them to see those orders putt in execucion and so to be continued. And nowe, forasmuch as the said inhabitantes of the Blackfryers have in their said peticion complayned to this court that, contrarie to the said Lordes orders, the owner of the said playehowse within the Blackfryers under the name of a private howse hath converted the same to a publique playhowse, unto which there is daily so great resort of people, and soe great multitudes of coaches, whereof many are hackney coaches bringing people of all sortes that sometimes all their streetes cannot conteyne them, that they endanger one the other, breake downe stalles, throw downe mens goodes from their shopps, hinder the passage of the inhabitantes there to and from their howses, lett the bringing in of their necessary provisions, that the tradesmen and shoppkeepers cannot utter their wares, nor the passengers goe to the common water-staires without danger of their lives and lyms, whereby manye times quarrells and effusion of blood hath followed, and the minister and people disturbed at the administracion of the Sacrament of Baptisme and publique prayers in the afteernoones ; whereupon, and after reading the said order and lettre of the Lordes shewed forth in this Court by the foresaid inhabitauntes, and consideracion thereof taken, this Court doth thinke fitt and soe order that the said playhowse be suppressed, and that the players shall from henceforth forbeare and desist from playing in that howse, in respect of the manifold abuses and disorders complayned of as aforesaid.

XI. A Collection of Papers relating to Shares and Sharers in the Globe and Blackfriars Theatres, 1635; from contemporary transcripts formerly preserved amongst the official manuscripts of the Lord Chamberlain of the Household at St. James's Palace. These documents have lately been transferred to our national Record Office.

(*a*) To the Right Honorable Philip Earle of Pembroke and Montgomery, Lord Chamberlaine of His Majesties houshold, Robert Benefield, Heliard Swanston and Thomas Pollard humbly represent these their grievances, ymploring his Lordships noble favor towardes them for their reliefe. That the petitioners have a long time with much patience expected to bee admitted sharers in the playhouses of the Globe and the Blackfriers, wherby they might reape some better fruit of their labours then hitherto they have done, and bee encouraged to proceed therin with cheerfulnes. That those few interested in the houses have, without any defalcacion or abatement at all, a full moyety of the whole gaines ariseing therby, excepting the outer dores, and such of the sayd houskeepers as bee actors doe likewise equally share with all the rest of the actors both in th'other moiety and in the sayd outer dores also.—That out of the actors moiety there is notwithstanding defrayed all wages to hired men, apparell, poetes, lightes and other charges of the houses whatsoever, soe that, betweene the gaynes of the actors, and of those few interessed as houskeepers, there is an unreasonable inequality.—That the house of the Globe was formerly divided into sixteen partes, wherof Mr. Cutbert Burbidge and his sisters had eight, Mrs. Condall four and Mr. Hemings four.—That Mr. Tailor and Mr. Lowen were long since admitted to purchase four partes betwixt them from the rest, vizt., one part from Mr. Hemings, two partes from Mrs. Condall, and halfe a part a peece from Mr. Burbidge and his sister.—That the three partes remaining to Mr. Hemings were afterwardes by Mr. Shankes surreptitiously purchased from him, contrary to the petitioners expectation, who hoped that, when any partes had beene to bee sold, they should have beene admitted to have bought and divided the same amongst themselves for their better livelyhood.—That the petitioners desire not to purchase or diminish any part of Mr. Taylors or Mr. Lowens shares, whose deserveings they must acknowledge to bee well worthy of their gaines, but in regard the petitioners labours, according to their severall wayes and abilityes, are equall to some of the rest, and for that others of the sayd houskeepers are neither actors, nor his Majesties servantes, and yet the petitioners profit and meanes of livelyhood soe much inferior and unequall to theires, as appeares before, they therfore desire that they may bee admitted to purchase for their moneys, at such rates as have beene formerly given, single partes a peece onely from those that have the greatest shares and may best spare them, vizt., that Mr. Burbadge and his sister, haveing three partes and a halfe a peece, may sell them two partes, and reserve two and a halfe a peece to themselves. And that Mr. Shankes, haveing three, may sell them one and reserve two, wherin they hope your Lordship will conceave their desires to bee just and modest; the rather for that the petitioners, not doubting of beeing admitted sharers in the sayd house the Globe, suffered lately the sayd houskeepers, in the name of his Majesties servantes, to sue and obtaine a decree in the Court of Requestes against Sir Mathew Brand for confirmation unto them of a lease paroll for about nine or ten yeeres yet to come, which they could otherwise have prevented untill themselves had beene made parties.—That for the house in the Blackfriers, it beeing divided into eight partes amongst the aforenamed houskeepers, and Mr. Shankes haveing two partes therof, Mr. Lowen, Mr. Taylor and each of the rest haveing but one part a peece, which two partes were by the sayd Mr. Shankes purchased of Mr. Heming, together with those three of the Globe as before, the petitioners desire and hope that your Lordship will conceave it likewise reasonable that the sayd Mr. Shankes may assigne over one of the sayd partes amongst them three, they giveing him such satisfaccion for the same as that hee bee noe looser therby.—Lastly, that your Lordship would to that purpose bee nobly pleased, as their

onely gracious refuge and protector, to call all the sayd houskeepers before you, and to use your Lordships power with them to conforme themselves therunto; the rather considering that some of the sayd housekeepers, who have the greatest shares, are neither actors nor his Majesties servantes as aforesayd, and yet reape most or the chiefest benefitt of the sweat of their browes, and live upon the bread of their labours, without takeing any paynes themselves. For which your petitioners shall have just cause to blesse your Lordship, as however they are dayly bound to doe with the devotions of most humble and obliged beadsmen.

Shares in the Globe.

Burbadge	3½	of a lease of 9 yeeres from our Lady Day last, 1635, not yet confirmed by Sir Mathew Brand to bee taken to feoffees.
Robinson	3½	
Condall	2	
Shankes	3	
Taylor	2	
Lowen	2	

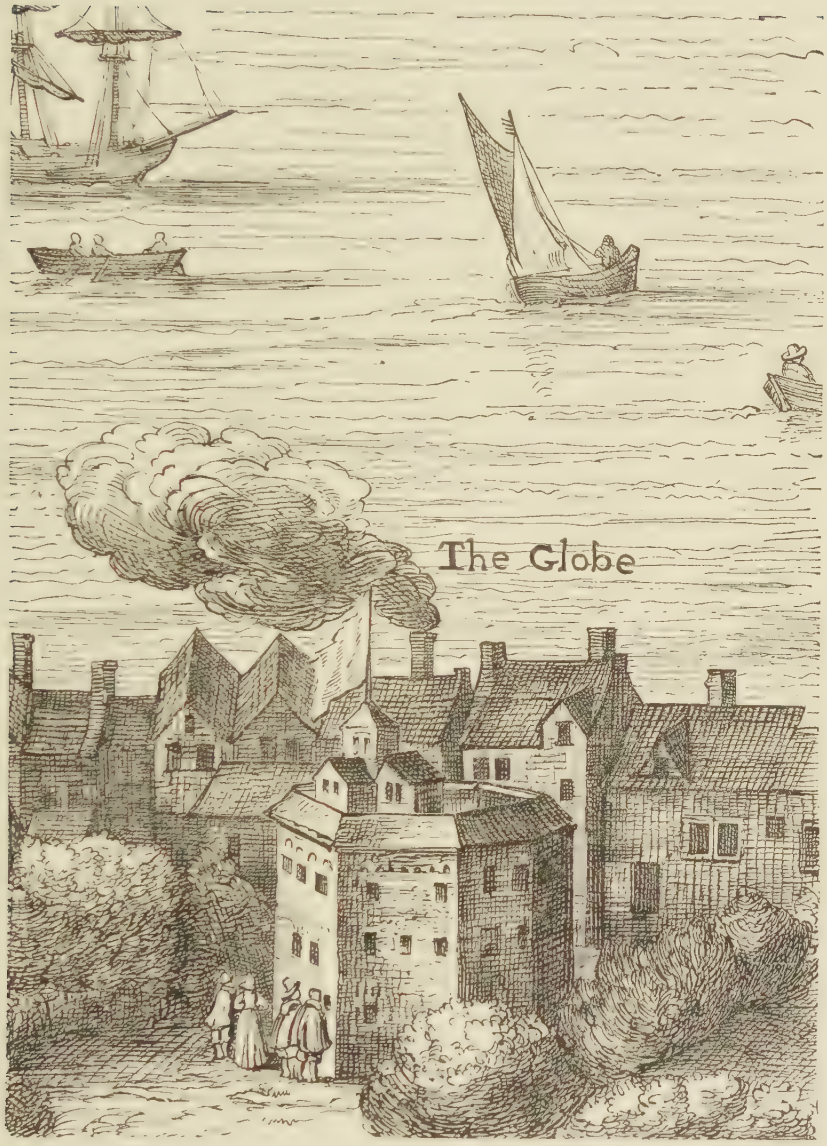
Blackfryers.—Shankes, 2. Burbadge, 1. Robinson, 1. Taylor, 1. Lowen, 1. Condall, 1. Underwood, 1.

(*b*) *Court at Theoballes, 12 July, 1635.*—Haveing considered this petition and the severall answeres and replyes of the parties, the merites of the petitioners, the disproportion of their shares, and the interest of his Majesties service, I have thought fitt and doe accordingly order that the petitioners, Robert Benefield, Eyllœrdt Swanston and Thomas Pollard, bee each of them admitted to the purchase of the shares desired of the severall persons mentioned in the petition for the fower yeeres remayning of the lease of the house in Blackfriers, and for five yeeres in that of the Globe, at the usuall and accustomed rates, and according to the proportion of the time and benefitt they are to injoy. And heerof I desire the houskeepers, and all others whome it may concerne, to take notice and to conforme themselves therin accordingly. The which if they or any of them refuse or delay to performe, if they are actors and his Majesties servantes, I doe suspend them from the stage and all the benefitt therof; and if they are onely interessed in the houses, I desire my Lord Privy Seale to take order that they may bee left out of the lease which is to bee made upon the decree in the Court of Requestes.—P. AND M.

(*c*) *Robert Benefield, Eyllardt Swanston, and Thomas Pollard doe further humbly represent unto your Lordship.*—That the houskeepers beeing but six in number, vizt., Mr. Cutbert Burbage, Mrs. Condall, Mr. Shankes, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Lowen and Mr. Robinson (in the right of his wife), have amongst them the full moyety of all the galleries and boxes in both houses, and of the tireing-house dore at the Globe.—That the actors have the other moyety, with the outer dores; but in regard the actors are halfe as many more, vizt., nine in number, their shares fall shorter and are a great deale lesse then the houskeepers; and yet, notwithstanding out of those lesser shares the sayd actors defray all charges of the house whatsoever, vizt., wages to hired men and boyes, musicke, lightes, &c., amounting to 900 or 1000 *li.* per annum or theraboutes, beeing 3 *li.* a day one day with another; besides the extraordinary charge which the sayd actors are wholly at for apparell and poetes, &c.—Wheras the sayd houskeepers out of all their gaines have not till our Lady Day last payd above 65 *li.* per annum rent for both houses, towardes which they rayse betweene 20 and 30 *li.* per annum from the tap-howses and a tenement and a garden belonging to the premisses, &c., and are at noe other charges whatsoever, excepting the ordinary reparations of the houses.—Soe that upon a medium made of the gaynes of the howskeepers and those of the actors one day with another throughout the yeere, the petitioners will make it apparent that when some of the houskepers share 12 *s.* a day at the Globe, the actors share not above 3 *s.* And then what those gaine that are both actors and houskeepers, and have their shares in both, your Lordship will easily judge, and therby finde the modesty of the petitioners suite, who desire onely to buy for their money one part a

peece from such three of the sayd houskepers as are fittest to spare them, both in respect of desert and otherwise, vizt., Mr. Shankes one part of his three ; Mr. Robinson and his wife, one part of their three and a halfe ; and Mr. Cutbert Burbidge the like.—And for the house of the Blackfriers, that Mr. Shankes, who now injoyes two partes there, may sell them likewise one, to bee divided amongst them three.—Humbly beseeching your Lordship to consider their long sufferings, and not to permitt the sayd howskeepers any longer to delay them, but to put an end to and settle the sayd busines, that your petitioners may not bee any further troublesome or importunate to your Lordship, but may proceed to doe their duty with cheerfullnes and alacritye.—Or otherwise in case of their refusall to conforme themselves, that your Lordship would bee pleased to consider whether it bee not reasonable and equitable that the actors in generall may injoy the benefitt of both houses to themselves, paying the sayd howskeepers such a valuable rent for the same as your Lordship shall thinke just and indifferent.—And your petitioners shall continue their dayly prayers for your Lordships prosperity and happines.

(*d*) *The answere of John Shankes to the petition of Robert Benefield, Eyllardt Swanston and Thomas Pollard, lately exhibited to the Right Honorable Philip, Earle of Pembroke and Montgomery, Lord Chamberlin of his Majesties houshold,—Humbly sheweth*,—That, about allmost two yeeres since, your suppliant, upon offer to him made by William Hemings, did buy of him one part hee had in the Blackfriers for about six yeeres then to come at the yeerly rent of 6 *li.* 5 *s.*, and another part hee then had in the Globe for about two yeeres to come, and payd him for the same two partes in ready moneys 156 *li.*, which sayd partes were offered to your suppliant, and were as free then for any other to buy as for your suppliant.—That about eleven months since, the sayd William Hemings, offering to sell unto your suppliant the remaining partes hee then had, viz., one in the Blackfriers, wherin hee had then about five yeeres to come, and two in the Globe, wherin hee had then but one yeere to come, your suppliant likewise bought the same, and payd for them in ready moneys more 350 *li.*, all which moneys soe disbursed by your suppliant amount to 506 *li.*, the greatest part wherof your suppliant was constrained to take up at interest, and your suppliant hath besides disbursed to the sayd William Hemings diverse other small summes of money since hee was in prison.—That your suppliant did neither fraudulently nor surreptitiously defeat any of the petitioners in their hope of buying the sayd partes, neither would the sayd William Hemings have sold the same to any of the petitioners, for that they would not have given him any such price for the same, but would, as now they endeavour to doe, have had the same against his will, and at what rates they pleased.—That your suppliant, beeing an old man in this quality, who in his youth first served your noble father, and after that, the late Queene Elizabeth, then King James, and now his royall Majestye, and haveing in this long time made noe provision for himselfe in his age, nor for his wife, children and grandchild, for his and their better livelyhood, haveing this oportunity, did at deere rates purchase these partes, and hath for a very small time as yet receaved the profites therof, and hath but a short time in them, and is without any hope to renew the same when the termes bee out ; hee therfore hopeth hee shall not bee hindred in the injoying the profitt therof, especially whenas the same are thinges very casuall and subject to bee discontinued, and lost by sicknes and diverse other wayes, and to yield noe proffitt at all.—That wheras the petitioners in their complaint say that they have not meanes to subsist, it shall by oath, if need bee, bee made apparent that every one of the three petitioners for his owne particular hath gotten and receaved this yeere last past of the summe of 180 *li.*, which, as your suppliant conceaveth, is a very sufficient meanes to satisfie and answere their long and patient expectation, and is more by above the one halfe then any of them ever gott, or were capable of elswhere, besides what Mr. Swanston, one of them who is most violent in this busines, who hath further had and receaved this last yeere above 34 *li.* for the profitt of a third part of



THE NEW GLOBE THEATRE, OPENED IN THE YEAR 1614.

one part in the Blackfriers which hee bought for 20 *li.*, and yet hath injoyed the same two or three yeeres allready, and hath still as long time in the same as your suppliant hath in his, who for soe much as Mr. Swanston bought for 20 *li.* your suppliant payd 60 *li.*—That when your suppliant purchased his partes, hee had noe certainty therof more then for one yeere in the Globe, and there was a chargeable suit then depending in the Court of Requestes betweene Sir Mathew Brend, knight, and the lessees of the Globe and their assignes, for the adding of nine yeeres to their lease in consideration that they and their predecessors had formerly beene at the charge of 1400 *li.* in building of the sayd house upon the burning downe of the former, wherin, if they should miscarry, for as yet they have not the assurance perfected by Sir Mathew Brend, your suppliant shall lay out his money to such a losse as the petitioners will never bee partners with him therin.—That your suppliant and other the lessees in the Globe and in the Blackfriers are chargeable with the payment of 100 *li.* yeerly rent, besides reparacions, which is dayly very chargeable unto them, all which they must pay and beare, whether they make any proffitt or nott, and soe reckoning their charge in building and fitting the sayd houses, yeerly rent and reparations, noe wise man will adventure his estate in such a course, considering their dealing with whome they have to doe, and the many casualtyes and dayly troubles therwith. That in all the affayres and dealinges in this world betweene man and man, it was and is ever held an inviolable principle that in what thing soever any man hath a lawfull interest and property hee is not to bee compelled to depart with the same against his will, which the complainantes endeavour.—And wheras John Heminges, the father of William Hemings, of whome your suppliant made purchase of the sayd partes, injoyed the same thirty yeeres without any molestacion, beeing the most of the sayd yeeres both player and houskeeper, and after hee gave over playing diverse yeeres; and his sonne, William Hemings, fower yeers after, though hee never had anything to doe with the sayd stage, injoyed the same without any trouble; notwithstanding, the complainantes would violently take from your petitioners the sayd partes, who hath still of his owne purse supplyed the company for the service of his Majesty with boyes, as Thomas Pollard, John Thompson deceased (for whome hee payed 40 *li.*), your suppliant haveing payd his part of 200 *li.* for other boyes since his comming to the company, John Honiman, Thomas Holcome and diverse others, and at this time maintaines three more for the sayd service. Neither lyeth it in the power of your suppliant to satisfie the unreasonable demandes of the complainantes, hee beeing forced to make over the sayd partes, for security of moneys taken up as aforesayd of Robert Morecroft of Lincolne, his wifes uncle, for the purchase of the sayd partes, untill hee hath made payment of the sayd moneys, which hee is not able to doe unlesse hee bee suffered to injoy the sayd partes during the small time of his lease, and is like to bee undone if they are taken from him.—All which beeing considered, your suppliant hopeth that your Lordship will not inforce your suppliant against his will to depart with what is his owne, and what hee hath deerly payd for, unto them that can claime noe lawfull interest therunto. And your suppliant, under your Lordships favour, doth conceave that if the petitioners, by those their violent courses, may obtaine their desires, your Lordship will never bee at quiet for their dayly complaintes, and it will bee such a president to all young men that shall follow heerafter, that they shall allwayes refuse to doe his Majesty service unlesse they may have whatsoever they will, though it bee other mens estates. And soe that which they pretend shall tend to the better gouvernment of the company, and inabling them to doe his Majesty service, the same will bee rather to the destruction of the company, and disabling of them to doe service to his Majestye; and besides, the benefitt and profitt which the petitioners doe yeerly make without any charge at all is soe good, that they may account themselves to bee well recompenced for their labour and paines, and yet when any partes are to bee sould, they may buy the same if they can gett the bargaine therof, paying for the same as others doe.—The humble

suite of your suppliant is that your honor will be pleased that hee may injoy that which hee hath deerly bought and truly payd for, and your suppliant, as in duty hee is bound, shall ever pray for your Lordship.

(*e*) *To the Right Honorable Philip Earle of Pembroke and Montgomery, Lord Chamberlaine of his Majesties houshold.—Right Honorable and our singular good Lord.*—Wee your humble suppliantes, Cutbert Burbage and Winifrid his brothers wife, and William his sonne, doe tender to your honorable consideration for what respectes and good reasons wee ought not in all charity to bee disabled of our livelyhoodes by men soe soone shott up, since it hath beene the custome that they should come to it by farre more antiquity and desert then these can justly attribute to themselves.—And first, humbly shewing to your honor the infinite charges, the manifold law-suites, the leases expiration, by the restraintes in sicknes times, and other accidentes, that did cutt from them the best part of the gaines that your honor is informed they have receaved.—The father of us, Cutbert and Richard Burbage, was the first builder of playhowses, and was himselfe in his younger yeeres a player. The Theater hee built with many hundred poundes taken up at interest.—The players that lived in those first times had onely the profitts arising from the dores, but now the players receave all the commings in at the dores to themselves and halfe the galleries from the houskepers. Hee built this house upon leased ground, by which meanes the landlord and hee had a great suite in law, and, by his death, the like troubles fell on us, his sonnes; wee then bethought us of altering from thence, and at like expence built the Globe, with more summes of money taken up at interest, which lay heavy on us many yeeres; and to ourselves wee joyned those deserveing men, Shakspere, Hemings, Condall, Philips and others, partners in the profittes of that they call the House, but makeing the leases for twenty-one yeeres hath beene the destruction of ourselves and others, for they dyeing at the expiration of three or four yeeres of their lease, the subsequent yeeres became dissolved to strangers, as by marrying with their widdowes and the like by their children.—Thus, Right Honorable, as concerning the Globe, where wee ourselves are but lessees. Now for the Blackfriers, that is our inheritance; our father purchased it at extreame rates, and made it into a playhouse with great charge and troble; which after was leased out to one Evans that first sett up the boyes commonly called the Queenes Majesties Children of the Chappell. In procesee of time, the boyes growing up to bee men, which were Underwood, Field, Ostler, and were taken to strengthen the Kings service; and the more to strengthen the service, the boyes dayly wearing out, it was considered that house would bee as fitt for ourselves, and soe purchased the lease remaining from Evans with our money, and placed men players, which were Hemings, Condall, Shakspeare, &c. And Richard Burbage, who for thirty-five yeeres paines, cost and labour, made meanes to leave his wife and children some estate, and out of whose estate soe many of other players and their families have beene mayntained, these new men, that were never bred from children in the Kings service, would take away with oathes and menaces that wee shall bee forced and that they will not thanke us for it; soe that it seemes they would not pay us for what they would have or wee can spare, which, more to satisfie your honor then their threatning pride, wee are for ourselves willing to part with a part betweene us, they paying according as ever hath beene the custome and the number of yeeres the lease is made for.—Then, to shew your Honor against these sayinges, that wee eat the fruit of their labours, wee referre it to your Honors judgement to consider their profittes, which wee may safely maintaine, for it appeareth by their owne accomptes for one whole yeere last past, beginning from Whitson Munday, 1634, to Whitson Munday, 1635, each of these complainantes gained severally, as hee was a player and noe howskeeper, 180 *li.* Besides Mr. Swanston hath receaved from the Blackfriers this yeere, as hee is there a houskeeper, above 30 *li.*, all which beeing accompted together may very well keepe him from starveing.—Wherfore your honors

A Facsimile of those portions of the Lord Chamberlain's Manuscript in which the Burbages mention Shakespeare. From the original contemporary transcript of the petition in the Public Records Office.

most humble suppliantes intreates[5] they may not further bee trampled upon then their estates can beare, seeing how deerly it hath beene purchased by the infinite cost and paynes of the family of the Burbages, and the great desert of Richard Burbage for his quality of playing, that his wife should not sterve in hir old age ; submitting ourselves to part with one part to them for valuable consideration and let them seeke further satisfaccion elsewhere, that is, of the heires or assignes of Mr. Hemings and Mr. Condall, who had theirs of the Blackfriers of us for nothing ; it is onely wee that suffer continually.—Therfore, humbly relyeing upon your Honorable charity in discussing their clamor against us, wee shall, as wee are in duty bound, still pray for the dayly increase of your honors health and happines.

(*f*) *John Shankes.—A peticion of John Shankes to my Lord Chamberlaine*, shewing that, according to his Lordships order, hee did make a proposition to his fellowes for satisfaccion, upon his assigening of his partes in the severall houses unto them ; but they not onely refused to give satisfaccion, but restrained him from the stage ; that, therfore, his Lordship would order them to give satisfaccion according to his propositions and computation.

Md. all concerning this and here entred were delivered annexed. } Answered, vizt., I desire Sir H. Herbert and Sir John Finett, and my solliciter Daniell Bedingfield, to take this petition and the severall papers heerunto annexed into their serious considerations, and to speake with the severall parties interested, and therupon and upon the whole matter to sett downe a proportionable and equitable summe of money to bee payd unto Shankes for the two partes which hee is to passe unto Benfield, Swanston and Pollard, and to cause a finall agreement and convayances to bee settled accordingly, and to give mee an account of their whole proceedinges in writing.—Aug. 1, 1635.

THE FOOL AND THE ICE.

When Ulysses tells his love-embarrassed colleague that "the fool slides o'er the ice that you should break," the imagery is so peculiar, it may be reasonably suspected that there is a reference to an extraneous story or incident which was in the author's mind at the period of composition. And if it can be shown that one of the latter alternatives is probable, the allegory cannot be received as an original fancy without the assumption of a very remarkable and unlikely coincidence. When, therefore, it is found that there happened, in the poet's own day and at a short distance from his native town, a somewhat remarkable event to which the line spoken by Ulysses would perfectly apply, we may conclude that Shakespeare was either present on the occasion or was familiar with its details.

It happened one winter that the players of Lord Chandos of Sudeley had been acting at Evesham, a town distant, by the then only main road, about fifteen miles from Stratford-upon-Avon. Their performances had been specially relished by Jack Miller, a native of the former place, and one of the natural imbeciles in whose eccentricities our ancestors so much delighted. He was, in fact, the popular Fool of the town and neighbourhood, so that when he announced his intention of decamping with his favourite performer, the clown, there was an anxiety on the part of the inhabitants to frustrate the design. They wished him, however, to have a last peep at the actors, so he was taken to the Hart Inn, and there was locked up in a room whence he could see them when they were on the road to their next quarters at Pershore, the Avon flowing between that route and the apartment which was selected for the temporary imprisonment. No one dreamt that further precautions were necessary, for, although the water bore a coating of ice, the latter was too thin for it to be considered possible that a boatless individual would be able to pass over the river, even if he succeeded in escaping from the tavern. But no sooner did Jack get a sight of his pet buffoon than, managing to alight to the ground from the window, he scudded over the ice to the company, executing his venturesome feat, to the utter amazement of them all, in perfect safety.

Amongst the members of the company witnessing the occurrence was Robert Armin, who was afterwards one of Shakespeare's own professional colleagues. This individual subsequently made a collection of tales respecting persons of the Jack Miller type, issuing it, in 1600, under the

title of Foole Vpon Foole or Six Sortes of Sottes, a curious little tract without the author's name, the writer simply describing himself as Clonnico de Curtanio Snuffe, meaning, by this odd phrase, that he was then filling the post of Clown at the Curtain Theatre. It was published anonymously a second time in 1605, as the work of Clonnico del Mondo Snuffe, in other words, the Clown at the Globe Theatre. When Armin, however, re-edited it in 1608 under the title of the Nest of Ninnies, he then openly acknowledged the composition. The history of the above-mentioned affair is introduced, in very nearly the same words, into all three editions, the following copy of the account being taken, with a few verbal corrections, from the first.

In the towne of Esom, in Worcestersh., Jacke Miller, being there borne, was much made of in every place. It hapned that the Lord Shandoyes players came to towne and used their pastimes there; which Jacke not a little loved, especially the clowne, whome he would imbrace with a joyfull spirit, and call him Grumball, for so he called himselfe in gentlemens houses, where he would imitate playes, dooing all himselfe, king, clowne, gentleman and all; having spoke for one, he would sodainly goe in, and againe returne for the other; and, stambring so beastly as he did, made mighty mirth: to conclude, he was a right innocent without any villany at all.—When these players as I speake of had done in the towne, they went to Partiar, and Jacke swore he would goe all the world over with Grumball, that he would. It was then a great frost new begun, and the haven was frozen over thinly; but heere is the wonder;—the gentleman that kept the Hart, an inne in the towne whose backside looked to the way that led to the river-side to Partiar, lockt up Jacke in a chamber next the haven, where he might see the players passe by; and they of the towne, loath to loose his company, desired to have it so; but he, I say, seeing them goe by, creepes through the window, and sayde, I come to thee, Grumball. The players stood all still to see further. He got downe very daungerously, and makes no more adoe, but boldly ventures over the haven, which is by the long bridge, as I gesse some forty yardes over; tut,—hee made nothing of it, but my heart aked to see it, and my eares heard the ize cracke all the way. When he was come unto them I was amazed, and tooke up a brick-bat, which there lay by, and threwe it, which no sooner fell upon the ize but it burst. Was not this strange that a foole of thirty yeeres was borne of that ize which would not indure the fall of a brick-bat?—yes, it was wonderfull me thought, but every one rated him for the deed, telling him it was daungerous. He considered his fault, and, knowing faults should be punished, he entreated Grumball the clowne, whom he so deerely loved, to whip him but with rosemary, for that he thought wold not smart. But the players in jest breecht him till the bloud came, which he tooke laughing, for it was his manner ever to weepe in kindnes and laugh in extreames. That this is true my eyes were witnesses, being then by.

It is satisfactory to find that the truth of this narrative is well supported by the accuracy of its references to the local details. The Hart Inn at Evesham, which continued to be a tavern till quite recently, was situated near the bridge over the Avon, and at a few doors beyond the house now known as the Crown. A road that skirts the eastern bank of the river is the one leading to Partiar, the yet local pronunciation of the name of the town, and travellers on that highway would have been distinctly visible to, and within a hearing distance of, spectators at those back windows of the first-named tavern which were nearest to them.

The period of Jack's adventure is unknown. Armin speaks of himself as having been in the service of the fourth Lord Chandos, who held the title from 1594 to 1602, but this information is given in an address to that nobleman's widow, so that it is not unlikely that the writer had been one of the retainers of his lordship's predecessor. Throughout the reign of Elizabeth the Chandos actors performed occasionally at least, if not often, in Gloucestershire and the adjoining counties, and the glacial exploit was perhaps a subject of local gossip. Shakespeare had also of course the opportunity of hearing all about it from Armin himself, but there is nothing to warrant a conjecture that he was an eye-witness of the transaction, or one that he had ever joined, even for the briefest period, the company that were astounded by the success of the perilous transit.

THE RATSEY EPISODE.

"A pretty Prancke passed by Ratsey upon certaine Players that he met by chance in an Inne, who denied their owne Lord and Maister, and used another Noblemans Name." This is the title of the following interesting chapter in Ratseis Ghost, here taken from the unique copy of that work preserved in the library of Earl Spencer at Althorp, co. Northampton. There is no date to this curious little quarto tract, but it was entered at the Stationers Hall on May the 31st, 1605. In all probability Shakespeare is included amongst the players who are mentioned as having arrived in London from the provinces in an impecunious condition, and afterwards risen to wealth.

Gamaliell Ratsey and his company travailing up and downe the countrey, as they had often times done before, *per varios casus et tot discrimina rerum*, still hazarding their severall happes as they had severall hopes, came by chance into an inne where that night there harbored a company of players; and Ratsey, framing himselfe to an humor of merriment, caused one or two of the chiefest of them to be sent for up into his chamber, where hee demanded whose men they were, and they answered they served such an honorable personage. I pray you, quoth Ratsey, let me heare your musicke, for I have often gone to plaies more for musicke sake then for action; for some of you not content to do well, but striving to over-doe and go beyond yourselves, oftentimes, by S. George, mar all; yet your poets take great paines to make your parts fit for your mouthes, though you gape never so wide. Other-some, I must needs confesse, are very wel deserving both for true action and faire deliverie of speech, and yet, I warrant you, the very best have sometimes beene content to goe home at night with fifteene pence share apeece. Others there are whom Fortune hath so wel favored that, what by penny-sparing and long practise of playing, are growne so wealthy that they have expected to be knighted, or at least to be conjunct in authority and to sit with men of great worship on the bench of justice. But if there were none wiser then I am, there should more cats build colledges, and more whoores turne honest women, then one before the world should be filled with such a wonder. Well, musicke was plaide, and that night passed over with such singing, dauncing and revelling, as if my Lord Prodigall hadde beene there in his ruines of excesse and superfluitie. In the morning, Ratsey made the players taste of his bountie, and so departed. But everie day hee had new inventions to obtaine his purposes, and as often as fashions alter, so often did he alter his stratagems, studying as much how to compasse a poore mans purse as players doe to win a full audience. About a weeke after, hee met with the same players, although hee had so disguised himselfe with a false head of hayre and beard that they could take no notice of him; and lying, as they did before, in one inne together, hee was desirous they should play a private play before him, which they did not in the name of the former noblemans servants; for, like camelions, they had changed that colour; but in the name of another, whose indeede they were, although afterwardes, when he heard of their abuse, hee discharged them and tooke away his warrant. For being far off, for their more countenance they would pretend to be protected by such an honourable man, denying their lord and maister, and comming within ten or twenty miles of him againe, they would shrowd themselves under their owne lords favour. Ratsey heard their play, and seemed to like that, though he disliked the rest, and verie liberally out with his purse and gave them fortie shillings,

with which they held themselves very richly satisfied, for they scarce had twentie shillings audience at any time for a play in the countrey. But Ratsey thought they should not enjoy it long, although he let them beare it about them till the next day in their purses ; for the morning beeing come, and they having packt away their luggage and some part of their companie before in a waggon, discharged the house and followed them presently. Ratsey intended not to bee long after, but having learned which way they travailed, hee, being verie wel horsed and mounted upon his blacke gelding, soone overtooke them ; and when they saw it was the gentleman that had beene so liberall with them the night before, they beganne to doe him much courtesie and to greete his late kindnesse with many thankes. But that was not the matter which he aymed at. Therefore he roundly tolde them they were deceived in him,—hee was not the man they tooke him for. I am a souldier, sayth he, and one that for meanes hath ventured my fortunes abroade, and now for money am driven to hazard them at home ; I am not to bee played upon by players ; therefore, be short, deliver mee your money ; I will turne usurer now ; my fortie shillings againe will not serve without interest. They beganne to make many faces, and to cappe and knee, but all would not serve their turne. Hee bade them leave off their cringing and complements and their apish trickes, and dispatch ; which they did for feare of the worst, seeing to begge was bootelesse ; and having made a desperate tender of their stocke into Ratseyes handes, he bad them play for more, for, sayes hee, it is an idle profession that brings in much profite, and every night where you come, your playing beares your charges and somewhat into purse. Besides, you have fidlers fare,—meat, drink and mony. If the worst be, it is but pawning your apparell, for as good actors and stalkers as you are have done it, though now they scorne it ; but in any case heereafter be not counterfaites ; abuse not honorable personages in using their names and countenance without their consent and privitie ; and because you are now destitute of a maister, I will give you leave to play under my protection for a senights space, and I charge you doe it, lest, when I meet you again, I cut you shorter by the hams and share with you in a sharper manner then I have done at this time. And for you, sirra, saies hee to the chiefest of them, thou hast a good presence upon a stage ; methinks thou darkenst thy merite by playing in the country. Get thee to London, for, if one man were dead, they will have much neede of such a one as thou art. There would be none in my opinion fitter then thyselfe to play his parts. My conceipt is such of thee, that I durst venture all the mony in my purse on thy head to play Hamlet with him for a wager. There thou shalt learne to be frugall,—for players were never so thriftie as they are now about London—and to feed upon all men, to let none feede upon thee ; to make thy hand a stranger to thy pocket, thy hart slow to performe thy tongues promise ; and when thou feelest thy purse well lined, buy thee some place or lordship in the country, that, growing weary of playing, thy mony may there bring thee to dignitie and reputation ; then thou needest care for no man, nor not for them that before made thee prowd with speaking their words upon the stage. Sir, I thanke you, quoth the player, for this good counsell ; I promise you I will make use of it, for I have heard, indeede, of some that have gone to London very meanly, and have come in time to be exceeding wealthy. And in this presage and propheticall humor of mine, sayes Ratsey, kneele downe—Rise up, Sir Simon Two Shares and a Halfe ; thou art now one of my knights, and the first knight that ever was player in England. The next time I meete thee, I must share with thee againe for playing under my warrant, and so for this time adiew. How ill hee brooked this new knighthood, which hee durst not but accept of, or liked his late counsell, which he lost his coine for, is easie to be imagined ; but whether he met with them againe, after the senights space that he charged them to play in his name, I have not heard it reported.

THE ONLY SHAKE-SCENE.

I. From a little work entitled,—" Greens Groats-worth of Wit, bought with a Million of Repentaunce. Describing the follie of youth, the falshoode of make-shift flatterers, the miserie of the negligent, and mischiefes of deceiuing Courtezans. Written before before® his death and published at his dying request.—Fœlicem fuisse infaustum.—London,—Printed by Thomas Creede, for Richard Oliue, dwelling in long long® Lane, and are there to be solde. 1596." This is the earliest edition known, but it was originally published in 1592, having been entered at Stationers Hall on the 20th of September in that year. The following is a copy of the writer's address—" To those Gentlemen, his Quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making Plaies, R. G. wisheth a better exercise, and wisdome to preuent his extremities."

If wofull experience may moove you, gentlemen, to beware, or unheard of wretchednes intreate you to take heed, I doubt not but you will looke backe with sorrow on your time past, and endevour with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not, for with thee wil I first begin, thou famous gracer of tragedians, that Greene, who hath said with thee, like the foole in his heart, there is no God, should now give glorie unto His greatnesse; for penitrating is His power, His hand lies heavie upon me, He hath spoken unto me with a voice of thunder, and I have felt, He is a God that can punish enimies. Why should thy excellent wit, His gift, be so blinded, that thou shouldst give no glory to the giver? Is it pestilent Machivilian pollicie that thou hast studied? O punish follie! What are his rules but meere confused mockeries, able to extirpate in small time the generation of mankinde. For if *sic volo, sic jubeo*, hold in those that are able to command; and if it be lawfull, *fas et nefas*, to doe anything that is beneficiall, onely tyrants should possesse the earth; and they, striving to exceede in tyranny, should each to other bee a slaughter-man; till the mightiest outliving all, one stroke were left for death, that in one age mans life should ende. The brother of this diabolicall atheisme is dead, and in his life had never the felicitie he aimed at; but as he began in craft, lived in feare, and ended in despaire. *Quum inscrutabilia sunt Dei judicia?* This murderer of many brethren had his conscience seared like Caine; this betrayer of him that gave his life for him inherited the portion of Judas; this apostata perished as ill as Julian: and wilt thou, my friend, be his disciple? Looke unto me, by him perswaded to that libertie, and thou shalt finde it an infernall bondage. I knowe the least of my demerits merit this miserable death; but wilfull striving against knowne truth exceedeth al the terrors of my soule. Defer not, with me, till this last point of extremitie; for little knowest thou how in the end thou shalt be visited.

With thee I joyne young Juvenall, that byting satyrist that lastlie with mee together writ a comedie. Sweete boy, might I advise thee, be advised, and get not many enemies by bitter words; inveigh against vaine men, for thou canst do it, no man better, no man so wel; thou hast a libertie to reproove all, and name none; for one being spoken to, al are offended; none being blamed, no man is injured. Stop shallow water still running, it will rage; tread on a worme, and it will turne; then blame not schollers vexed with sharpe lines, if they reprove thy too much libertie of reproofe.

And thou, no lesse deserving then the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferiour; driven (as myselfe) to extreame shifts; a little have I to say to thee; and

were it not an idolatrous oth, I would sweare by sweet S. George thou art unworthie better hap, sith thou dependest on so meane a stay. Base minded men al three of you, if by my miserie ye be not warned ; for unto none of you, like me, sought those burres to cleave ; those puppits, I meane, that speake from our mouths, those anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they al have beene beholding, is it not like that you to whome they all have beene beholding, shall, were ye in that case that I am now, be both at once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not ; for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that, with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide*, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you ; and being an absolute *Johannes Factotum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrie. O that I might intreate your rare wits to be imployed in more profitable courses, and let those apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions! I know the best husband of you all will never prove an usurer, and the kindest of them all wil never proove a kinde nurse ; yet, whilst you may, seeke you better maisters, for it is pittie men of such rare wits should be subject to the pleasures of such rude groomes.

In this I might insert two more, that both have writ against these buckram gentlemen ; but let their owne works serve to witnesse against their owne wickednesse, if they persever to maintaine any more such peasants. For other new commers, I leave them to the mercie of these painted monsters, who, I doubt not, will drive the best minded to despise them ; for the rest, it skils not though they make a jeast at them.

But now returne I againe to you three, knowing my miserie is to you no news ; and let me heartily intreate you to bee warned by my harmes. Delight not, as I have done, in irreligious oaths ; for from the blasphemers house a curse shall not depart. Despise drunkennes, which wasteth the wit and making® men all equal unto beasts. Flie lust, as the deathsman of the soule, and defile not the temple of the Holy Ghost. Abhorre those epicures, whose loose life hath made religion lothsome to your eares ; and when they sooth you with tearmes of maistership, remember Robert Greene, whome they have often so flattered, perishes now for want of comfort. Remember, gentlemen, your lives are like so many lighted tapers, that are with care delivered to all of you to maintaine ; these with windpuft wrath may be extinguisht, which drunkennes put out, which negligence let fall ; for mans time of itselfe is not so short, but it is more shortened by sin. The fire of my light is now at the last snuffe, and the want of wherewith to sustaine it ; there is no substance left for life to feede on. Trust not then, I beseech yee, to such weake staies ; for they are as changeable in minde as in many attires. Well, my hand is tired, and I am forst to leave where I would begin ; for a whole booke cannot containe their wrongs which I am forst to knit up in some few lines of words.—*Desirous that you should live, though himselfe be dying.—Robert Greene.*

II. The Preface to—"*Kind-Harts Dreame. Conteining fiue Apparitions, with their Inuectiues against abuses raigning. Deliuered by seuerall Ghosts vnto him to be publisht, after Piers Penilesse Post had refused the carriage.—Inuita Inuidiæ.—by H. C.—Imprinted at London for William Wright.*" *This interesting work is undated, but it was entered at Stationers Hall on December the 8th, 1592.*

To the Gentlemen Readers.—It hath beene a custome, gentlemen, in my mind commendable, among former authors, whose workes are no lesse beautified with eloquente phrase than garnished with excellent example, to begin an exordium to the readers of their time. Much more convenient I take it, should the writers in these daies, wherein that gravitie of enditing by the elder exercised is not observ'd, nor that modest decorum kept which they continued, submit their labours to the favourable censures of their learned overseers. For seeing nothing can be said that hath not

been before said, the singularitie of some mens conceits, otherwayes exellent well deserving, are no more to be soothed than the peremptorie posies of two very sufficient translators commended. To come in print is not to seeke praise, but to crave pardon; I am urgd to the one, and bold to begge the other; he that offendes, being forst, is more excusable than the wilfull faultie; though both be guilty, there is difference in the guilt. To observe custome, and avoid, as I may, cavill, opposing your favors against my feare, Ile shew reason for my present writing and after proceed to sue for pardon. About three moneths since died M. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry bookesellers hands, among other his Groatsworth of Wit, in which a letter, written to divers play-makers, is offensively by one or two of them taken; and because on the dead they cannot be avenged, they wilfully forge in their conceites a living author; and after tossing it two and fro, no remedy but it must light on me. How I have all the time of my conversing in printing hindred the bitter inveying against schollers, it hath been very well knowne; and how in that I dealt, I can sufficiently proove. With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them I care not if I never be. The other, whome at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that, as I have moderated the heate of living writers, and might have usde my owne discretion,—especially in such a case, the author beeing dead,—that I did not I am as sory as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because myselfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill, than he exelent in the qualitie he professes;—besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that aprooves his art. For the first, whose learning I reverence, and, at the perusing of Greenes booke, stroke out what then in conscience I thought he in some displeasure writ; or, had it beene true, yet to publish it was intollerable; him I would wish to use me no worse than I deserve. I had onely in the copy this share;—it was il written, as sometimes Greenes hand was none of the best; licensd it must be ere it could bee printed, which could never be if it might not be read. To be breife, I writ it over; and, as neare as I could, followed the copy; onely in that letter I put something out, but in the whole booke not a worde in; for I protest it was all Greenes, not mine nor Maister Nashes, as some unjustly have affirmed. Neither was he the writer of an Epistle to the second part of Gerileon, though by the workemans error T. N. were set to the end;—that I confesse to be mine, and repent it not.

Thus, gentlemen, having noted the private causes that made me nominate myselfe in print; being as well to purge Master Nashe of that he did not, as to justifie what I did, and withall to confirm what M. Greene did; I beseech yee accept the publike cause, which is both the desire of your delight and common benefite; for though the toye bee shadowed under the title of Kind-hearts Dreame, it discovers the false hearts of divers that wake to commit mischiefe. Had not the former reasons been, it had come forth without a father; and then shuld I have had no cause to feare offending, or reason to sue for favour. Now am I in doubt of the one, though I hope of the other; which, if I obtaine, you shall bind me hereafter to bee silent till I can present yee with something more acceptable.—*Henrie Chettle.*

THE COPYRIGHT ENTRIES.

1593.—xviij° Aprilis.—Richard Feild.—Entred for his copie, vnder thandes of the Archbisshop of Cant. and Mr. Warden Stirrop, a booke intuled® Venus and Adonis.—Assigned ouer to Mr. Harrison sen:, 25 Junij, 1594. *The last paragraph is a marginal note inserted at or near the latter date.*

1593-4.—vj.^to die Februarij.—John Danter.—Entred for his copye, vnder thandes of bothe the wardens, a booke intituled a Noble Roman Historye of Tytus Andronicus.

1593-4.—xij° Marcij. Thomas Myllington. Entred for his copie, vnder the handes of bothe the wardens, a booke intituled the firste parte of the contention of the twoo famous houses of york and Lancaster, with the deathe of the good Duke Humfrey, and the banishement and deathe of the duke of Suff: and the tragicall ende of the prowd Cardinall of winchester, with the notable rebellion of Jack Cade and the duke of yorkes first clayme vnto the crowne.

1594.—9 May.—Mr. Harrison Sen.—Entred for his copie, vnder thand of Mr. Cawood, warden, a booke intituled the Ravyshement of Lucrece.

1594.—25 Junij.—Mr. Harrison Sen.—Assigned ouer vnto him from Richard Feild, in open court holden this day, a book called Venus and Adonis, the which was before entred to Ric. Feild, 18 April, 1593.

1596.—25 Junij.—William Leeke.—Assigned ouer vnto him for his copie from Mr. Harrison thelder, in full court holden this day, by the said Mr. Harrisons consent, a booke called Venus and Adonis.

1597.—29° Augusti.—Andrew Wise.—Entred for his copie, by appoyntment from Mr. Warden Man, The Tragedye of Richard the Second.

1597.—20 Octobr.—Andrewe Wise.—Entred for his copie, vnder thandes of Mr. Barlowe and Mr. warden Man, The tragedie of kinge Richard the Third, with the death of the duke of Clarence.

1597-8.—1597, Annoque R. R. Eliz: 40°. xxv^to die Februarij.—Andrew Wyse.—Entred for his copie, vnder thandes of Mr. Dix and Mr. Warden Man, a booke intituled The historye of Henry the iiij.^th with his battaile at Shrewsburye against Henry Hottspurre of the Northe, with the conceipted mirthe of Sir John Falstoff.

1598.—Anno 40^mo Regine Elizabethe, xxij.° Julij.—James Robertes.—Entred for his copie, vnder the handes of bothe the wardens, a booke of the marchaunt of Venyce, or otherwise called the Jewe of Venyce, Prouided that yt bee not prynted by the said James Robertes, or anye other whatsoeuer, without lycence first had from the Right honorable the lord chamberlen.

1600.—4 Augusti.—As yow like yt, a booke; Henry the Fift, a booke; The Commedie of Muche A doo about nothinge, a booke,—to be staied. *In the original the last three words are on the side of a bracket, denoting that they refer to all the plays here mentioned.*

1600.—14 Augusti.—Thomas Pavyer.—Entred for his copyes, by direction of Mr. White, warden, vnder his hand wrytinge, These copyes followinge, beinge thinges formerlye printed and sett over to the sayd Thomas Pavyer, viz. . . The historye of Henrye the v.^th with the battell of Agencourt.

1600.—23 Augusti.—Andrewe Wyse; William Aspley.—Entred for their copies,

vnder the handes of the wardens, twoo bookes, the one called Muche adoo about Nothinge, thother the second parte of the history of Kinge Henry the iiij.th, with the humors of Sir John Fallstaff, wrytten by Mr. Shakespere.

1600.—8 Octobr. Tho. Fyssher.—Entred for his copie, vnder the handes of Mr. Rodes and the wardens, A booke called A mydsommer nightes dreame.

1600.—28 Octobr.—Tho. Haies.—Entred for his copie, vnder the handes of the wardens and by consent of Mr. Robertes, A booke called the booke of the Merchant of Venyce.

1601-2.—18 Januarij.—Jo. Busby.—Entred for his copie, vnder the hand of Mr. Seton, a booke called, An excellent and pleasant conceited commedie of Sir Jo. Faulstof and the merry wyves of windesor. *Immediately after this under the same day is the following entry*,—Arthure Johnson.—Entred for his copye, by assignement from John Busbye, A booke called an excellent and pleasant conceyted Comedie of Sir John Faulstafe and the merye wyves of windsor.

1602.—44 Re., 19 April.—Tho. Pavier.—Entred for his copies, by assignement from Thomas Millington, these bookes folowinge, salvo jure cuiuscunque, viz., The first and second parte of Henry the vi^t., ij. bookes; a booke called Titus and Andronicus. Entred by warrant vnder Mr. Setons hand.

1602.—xxvj^to Julij.—James Robertes.—Entred for his Copie, vnder the handes of Mr. Pasfeild and Mr. Waterson, warden, A booke called the Revenge of Hamlett Prince Denmarke®, as yt was latelie Acted by the Lo: Chamberleyn his servantes.

1602-3.—7 Febr.—Mr. Robertes.—Entered for his copie, in full Court holden this day, to print when he hath gotten sufficient aucthority for yt, The booke of Troilus and Cresseda as yt is acted by my Lord Chamberlens men.

1603.—1 Regis Ja., 25 Junj.—Math. Lawe.—Entred for his copies, in full courte holden this day, these copies folowinge, viz., iij. enterludes or playes; the first is of Richard the 3, the second of Richard the 2, the third of Henry the 4 the first parte, all kinges; all whiche, by consent of the company, are sett ouer to him from Andr: Wyse.

1606-7.—22, Januar.—Mr. Linge.—Entred for his copies, by direccion of a Court, and with consent of Mr. Burby vnder his handwryting, These iij. copies, viz., Romeo and Juliett, Loues Labour Loste, The taminge of a Shrewe.

1607.—5^to Regis, 19 Novembr.—Jo. Smythick.—Entred for his copies, vnder thandes of the wardens, these bookes folowing whiche dyd belonge to Nicholas Lynge, viz., a booke called Hamlett; Romeo and Julett; Loues labour lost.

1607.—5 Regis 26 Nov.—Na. Butter; Jo. Busby.—Entred for theer copie, vnder thandes of Sir Geo. Buck, knight, and thwardens, a book called Mr. William Shakespeare his historye of Kinge Lear, as yt was played before the Kinges maiestie at Whitehall vppon St. Stephans night at Christmas last, by his maiesties servantes playinge vsually at the globe on the Banksyde.

1608.—6^to regis Jacobi, 2^do die Maij,—Mr. Pavyer.—Entered for his copie, vnder the handes of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Warden Seton, A booke called A Yorkshire Tragedy, written by Wylliam Shakespere.

1608.—20 May.—Edw. Blount.—Entred for his copie, vnder thandes of Sir Geo. Buck, knight, and Mr. Warden Seton, a booke called, The booke of Perycles prynce of Tyre.—*Under the same day is the following entry*,—Edw. Blunt.—Entred also for his copie, by the lyke aucthoritie, a booke called Anthony and Cleopatra.

1608-9.—28^uo Januarij.—Ri. Bonion; Henry Walleys.—Entred for their copy, vnder thandes of Mr. Segar, deputy to Sir George Bucke, and Mr. Warden Lownes, a booke called The history of Troylus and Cressula®.

1609.—20 May.—Tho. Thorpe.—Entred for his copie, vnder the handes of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Lownes, warden, a Booke called Shakespeares sonnettes.

1613-4.—Primo Martij, 1613.—Roger Jackson.—Entred for his coppies, by consent of Mr. John Harrison the eldest, and by order of a Court, these 4 bookes followinge,

viz.t,—Mascalls first booke of Cattell; Mr. Dentes sermon of repentance; Recordes Arithmeticke; Lucrece.

1616-7.—16° Febr. 1616. Rr. 14°.—Mr. Barrett.—Assigned ouer vnto him by Mr. Leake, and by order of a full Courte, Venus and Adonis.

1619.—8° Julij, 1619.—Lau: Hayes.—Entred for his copies, by consent of a full Court, theis two copies following, which were the copies of Thomas Haies, his fathers, viz.t, a play called the Marchant of Venice, and the Ethiopian History.

1619-20.—8° Martij, 1619.—John Parker.—Assigned ouer vnto him, with the consent of Mr. Barrett and order of a full Court holden this day, all his right in Venus and Adonis.

1621.—6° Octobris, 1621.—Tho: Walkley.—Entred for his copie, vnder the handes of Sir George Buck and Mr. Swinhowe, warden, The Tragedie of Othello the moore of Venice.

1623.—8° Nouembris, 1623, Rr. Jac. 21°—Mr. Blounte; Isaak Jaggard.—Entred for their copie vnder the hands of Mr. Doctor Worrall and Mr. Cole, warden, Mr. William Shakspeers Comedyes, Histories and Tragedyes, soe manie of the said copies as are not formerly entred to other men, viz.t. *Comedyes.* The Tempest. The two gentlemen of Verona. Measure for Measure. The Comedy of Errors. As you like it. All's well that ends well. Twelfe night. The winters tale.—*Histories.* The thirde parte of Henry the sixt. Henry the eight.—*Tragedies.* Coriolanus. Timon of Athens. Julius Cæsar. Mackbeth. Anthonie and Cleopatra. Cymbeline.

THE COVENTRY MYSTERIES.

According to Matthew Paris, the story of St. Catherine was dramatised about the commencement of the twelfth century by one Geoffrey, a learned Norman then in England, in a play which was acted at Dunstable at that period. This is the earliest notice of the drama in this country which has been discovered, but it is not at all likely that the performance was in the English language. It may, indeed, be safely assumed that all the plays acted in England at this time, and for several generations afterwards, were composed either in Latin or Anglo-Norman, the testimony which assigns the composition of the Chester Mysteries to the thirteenth century being unworthy of credence. The earliest piece in English of a dramatic character known to exist is a metrical dialogue between three persons, which is preserved on a vellum roll in a handwriting of the commencement of the fourteenth century. It is entitled *Interludium de Clerico et Puella*, but there is no evidence to show that it was intended for the stage. It may have been merely an interlocutory poem like the contemporary Harrowing of Hell, which has been usually, but perhaps erroneously, considered to be one of the old English mysteries. Dismissing the consideration of these pieces for the obvious reason that there is at least no substantial proof that either of them are connected with the subject, the history of the English drama, so far as can be gathered from the materials which have been preserved, really commences with the plays which were exhibited on movable stages either by the guilds of towns or by itinerant companies in and after the fourteenth century. Amongst many other places, Chester, York and Coventry may be mentioned as having been then and for long afterwards specially celebrated for these performances, which usually took place at the time of the festival of Corpus Christi or at Whitsuntide; but as Shakespeare would most likely have formed one of a Warwickshire audience, observations on the subject will be mainly restricted to those of the last-named city.

It should be remarked at the outset that the interesting plays, usually termed the Coventry Mysteries, a transcript of which, made in the fifteenth century, is in MS. Cotton. Vespas. D. 8, were not performed, so far as is known, by any of the trading companies of that city, but by itinerant players from Coventry (Dugdale's Warwickshire, ed. 1656, p. 116), who acted those dramas in various towns, a fact which appears from the concluding lines of the prologue. Very few of the plays which are noted as having been exhibited by the above-named trading companies

have been preserved, but there was until lately a curious one at Longbridge House, transcribed in the form in which it was revised by one Robert Croo in the year 1534, and then performed by the guild of the Shearmen and Tailors. The subjects of this pageant are the Birth of Christ and the Adoration of the Magi, with the Flight into Egypt and the Murder of the Innocents. It is not at all improbable that Shakespeare witnessed some late performance of this curious drama, in which the boisterous fury of Herod is depicted with what would now be thought a ludicrous exaggeration, greater perhaps than in any other play in which he is introduced, and strikingly justifying the expression of out-heroding Herod. This braggadocio describes himself as "prynce of purgatorré and cheff capten of hell," and also as "the myghttyst conquerowre that ever walkid on grownd," observing,—"Magog and Madroke bothe did I confownde,=And with this bryght bronde there bonis I brak on sundr." He tells the audience that it is he who is the cause of the thunder, and that the clouds were frequently so disturbed at the sight of his "feyrefull contenance" that "for drede therof the verré yerth doth quake." When the Magi escape his fury knows literally no bounds,—"I stampe, I stare, I loke all abowtt,=Myght I them take I schuld them bren at a glede,=I rent, I rawe, and now run I wode." After this outburst, Herod not merely storms furiously on the platform, but descends from the scaffold and exhibits the violence of his passion in the street, as appears from the following curious stage-direction,—"here Erode ragis in the pagond and in the strete also." Hamlet's suggestion that the riotous bluster of such a personage could be exceeded by that of any other actor, was certainly significant of the very extremity of rant in the latter.

The performances of these mysteries at the festival of Corpus Christi were resorted to by numbers of people from what were then long distances, and thither might the boy Shakespeare have been taken by his parents for a holiday treat. Dugdale, writing about the middle of the seventeenth century, and speaking of Coventry, observes,—"I myselfe have spoke with some old people who had in their younger yeares bin eye-witnesses of these pageants soe acted, from whome I have bin tolde that the yearly confluence of people *from farr and neare* to see that shew was extraordinary great, and which yielded noe small advantage to this citty," original MS. of Dugdale's Antiquities of Warwickshire preserved at Merevale. The exhibitions here alluded to were performed on movable scaffolds that were passed at intervals to various localities, so that several plays were continually being acted at one and the same time in different places,—a judicious method of separating the audiences in those days of very narrow streets, and of enabling each group to witness a series of performances every day of the festival. These pageants, observes Dugdale in his Antiquities of Warwickshire, ed. 1656,

p. 116, "had theaters for the severall scenes very large and high, placed upon wheels and drawn to all the eminent parts of the city for the better advantage of spectators." A more elaborate account of them is given by a clergyman who witnessed some of the later performances of the Chester mysteries, which were no doubt conducted similarly to those of Coventry,—"every company had his pagiant or parte, which pagiants weare a high scafolde with two rowmes, a higer® and a lower, upon four wheeles; in the lower they apparelled themselves, and in the higher rowme they played, beinge all open on the tope, that all behoulders mighte heare and see them; the places where the played them was in every streete; they begane first at the Abay gates, and when the firste pagiante was played, it was wheeled to the Highe Crosse before the mayor, and so to every streete, and soe every streete had a pagiant playinge before them at one time till all the pagiantes for the daye appoynted weare played; and when one pagiant was neere ended, worde was broughte from streete to streete that soe the mighte come in place thereof excedinge orderlye, and all the streetes have their pagiantes afore them all at one time playeinge togeather; to se which playes was great resorte, and also scafoldes and stages made in the streetes in those places where they determined to playe theire pagiantes," MS. Harl. 1948. It has been frequently stated that there were sometimes three rooms in the pageant, the highest representing heaven, the middle one the earth, and the lowest the infernal regions. This was the case in some of the continental performances, but there is no good evidence that the English pageant ever contained more than two rooms. That the lower one of the latter was not exclusively used for a tiring-house is, however, certain. There were trap-doors on the floor of the stage through which the performers ascended and descended, and in some instances the declension was certainly intended to be to the place of torment. A similar contrivance was occasionally adopted on the supplementary scaffolds. "Here xal entyr the Prynse of Dylfs in a stage and helle ondyrneth that stage," stage-direction in Mary Magdalene, Digby Mysteries, xvi. Cent. In the same mystery the bad angel is represented as entering "into hell with thondyr," no doubt through the grotesquely painted hell-mouth, a singular contrivance which has been previously described.

The vehicles which Dugdale calls *theaters* were in Shakespeare's time always termed *pageants*. They were not constructed merely for temporary use, but were substantially formed of wood and lasted for years, having been carefully preserved by the guilds in their various pageant-houses, whence they were brought out when the performances of the mysteries were arranged to take place. Some, if not all, of these houses were remaining at Coventry in the poet's early days. "Paid for a lode of cley for the padgyn howse, vj. *d*; paid for iij. sparis for the same howse, vj. *d*; paid to the dawber and his man, xiiij. *d*; paid to the

carpyntur for his worke, iiij. *d*; paid for a bunche and halfe of lathe, ix. *d*; paid for vj. pennye naiylles, ij. *d*," accounts of the Smiths' Company, 1571, MS. Longbridge. "Spent at Mr. Sewelles of the company about the pavynge of the pajen house, vj. *d*; payd for the pavynge of the pagen house, xxij. *d*; payd for a lode of pybeles, xij. *d*; for a lode sande, vj. *d*," Smiths' Accounts, 1576, MS. ibid. "Item, paide to James Bradshawe for mendynge the pageant-howse doores, iiij. *d*; item, to Christofer Burne for a key and settynge on the locke on the doore, v. *d*; item, paide to Baylyffe Emerson for halfe yeres rente of the pageant-howse, ij. *s.* vj. *d*; item, gyven to Bryan, a sharman, for his good wyll of the pageante-howse, x. *d*," Smiths' Accounts, 1586, MS. ibid.

The pageant itself may be described as a wooden structure which consisted of two rectangular rooms erected on the floor of a strong wagon, the lower apartment being enclosed with painted boards, and the upper one open, the latter having a decorated canopy supported by pilasters or columns rising from each corner of the floor, and ornamented at the top with banners or other appendages. In the following series of extracts referring to the Coventry pageants a few of the more curious ancient entries respecting them are included, there being no reason for believing that there was any material variation in the appliances or representations of the mysteries from the fifteenth century to the time of Shakespeare. "Also it is ordenyd that the jorneymen of the seyd crafte schall have yerely vj. *s.* viij. *d*, and for that they schall have owte the paggent, and on Corpus Christi day to dryve it from place to place ther as it schal be pleyd, and then for to brynge it geyn into the paggent howse without ony hurte nyther defawte, and they for to put the master to no more coste," ordinances of the Company of Weavers of Coventry, 1453, MS. "Item, expende at the fest of Corpus Christi yn reparacion of the pagent, that ys to say, a peyre of new whelys, the pryce viij. *s*; item, for naylys and ij. hokys for the sayd pagiente, iiij. *d*; item, for a cord and sope to the sayde pagent, ij. *d*; item, for to have the pagent ynto Gosford strete, xij. *d*," accounts of the Company of Smiths of Coventry, 1462, MS. Longbridge. "Item, in met and drynk on mynstrelles and on men to drawe the pagent, xxij. *d*," Smiths' Accounts, 1467, MS. ibid. "Item, rysshes to the pagent, ij. *d*; item, ij. clampys of iron for the pagent, viij. *d*; item, ij. legges to the pagent and the warkemanship withall, vj. *d*," Smiths' Accounts, 1470, MS. ibid. "Expenses to brynge up the pagent into the Gosford Strete amonge the feliship, viij. *d*; expenses for burneysshyng and peyntyng of the fanes to the pagent, xx. *d*; item, cloutnayle and other nayle and talowe to the pagent, and for waysshyng of the seid pagent and ruysshes, vj. *d.* ob.; item, at bryngyng the pagent owt of the house, ij. *d*; item, nayles and other iron gere to the pagent, viij. *d.* ob.; expenses to a joyner for workemanshipp to the pagent, vij. *d*,"

Smiths' Accounts, 1471, MS. ibid. "Item, for havyng furth the pagent on the Wedonsday, iij. *d*; item, paid for ij. peyre newe whelis, viij. *s*; expenses at the settyng on of hem, vij. *d*; item, for byndyng of thame, viij. *d*; paid to a carpenter for the pagent rowf, vj. *d*," Smiths' Accounts, 1480, MS. ibid. "Item, for the horssyng of the padgeantt and the axyll tree to the same, xvj. *d*; item, for the hawyng of the padgeantt in and out, and wasshyng it, viij. *d*," Smiths' Accounts, 1498, MS. ibid. "Item, paid for ij. cordes for the draught of the paygaunt, j. *d*; item, paid for shope and gresse to the whyles, j. *d*; item, paid for havyng oute of the paygant and swepyng therof and havyng in, and for naylles and ij. claspes of iron, and for mendyng of a claspe that was brokon, and for coterellis and for a bordur to the pagaunte, xix. *d*," Smiths' Accounts, 1499, MS. ibid. "Paid for dryvyng of the pagent, iiij. *s*. iiij. *d*; paid for russys and soop, ij. *d*," Smiths' Accounts, 1547, MS. ibid. The soap was used for greasing the wheels, and the rushes were strewn on the floor of the pageant. "Item, payd to payntter for payntyng of the pagent tope, xxij. *d*," Smiths' Accounts, 1554, MS. ibid. "Item, spent on the craft when the overloked the pagyand, ij. *s*; item, payd for iiij. harneses hyrynge, iij. *s*; item, payd to the players betwene the stages, viij. *d*; item, payd for dressynge the pagyand, vj. *d*; item, payd for kepynge the wynd, vj. *d*; item, payd for dryvyng the pagyand, iiij. *s*; item payd to the dryvers in drynke, viij. *d*; item, payd for balls, vj. *d*; item, payd to the mynstrell, viij. *d*," accounts of the Cappers' Company for 1562, delivered in February, 1563, MS. ibid. "Item, paid for a ledge to the scafolde, vj. *d*; item, paid for ij. ledges to the pagiand, viij. *d*; item, paid for grett naylles, vj. *d*; item, for makynge clene the pagiand house, ij. *d*; item, paid for washenge the pagiand clothes, ij. *d*; item, for dryvinge the pagiand, vj. *s*. vj. *d*; item, paid to the players at the second stage, viij. *d*," Pageant Accounts of the Cappers' Company for 1568, MS. ibid. "Paid for laburrars for horssyng the padgang, xvj. *d*; spent abowt the same bessynes, xvj. *d*; for takyng of the yron of the olde whele, x. *d*; paid for poyntes and paper, iij. *d*," accounts of the Smiths' Company, 1570, MS. ibid. The pageant was accompanied on rare occasions with what were termed scaffolds or stages, which appear to have been merely pageants of small dimensions appropriated to the use of individual characters. These scaffolds were mounted on wheels, but if they were attached to the pageant in the transit of the latter to its various stations, they were certainly sometimes separated from it during the performance. It occasionally happened that scenes of the play, with or without properties and mechanical contrivances, were exhibited outside between the scaffolds or between the pageant and the scaffolds. Herod, as has been previously mentioned, sometimes "raged" in the street as well as on the platform. Some of the actors would at times descend from the latter and mount their steeds, while

others came on horseback to the pageant, according to the necessities of the history which was represented.

There were occasional performances of the mysteries at Coventry during all the time of Shakespeare's boyhood. In 1567 the following were the "costes and charges of the pagiand" of the Cappers' Company, —"Item, payd for a cloutt to the pagiand whelle, ij. *d*; item, payd for a ponde of sope to the pagiand, iij. *d*; item, payd to the players at the second stage, viij. *d*; item, payd for balles, viij. *d*; item, payd to the mynstrell, viij. *d*; item, payd to Pilat for his gloves, ij. *d*; item, payd for assyden for Pilat's head, ij. *d*; item, payd to Jorge Loe for spekyng the Prologue, ij. *d*.," accounts delivered in January, 1568, MS. Longbridge. In 1568 there was another account of a similar character for the same company's pageant,—"Item, paid for balles, viij. *d*; item, paid for Pylatt gloves, iiij. *d*; item, paid for the spekynge of the Prologe, ij. *d*; item, paid for prikynge the songes, xij. *d*; item, paid for makynge and coloringe the ij. myters, ij. *s*. iiij. *d*; item, paid for makynge of hellmothe new, xxj. *d*," MS. ibid. This company had also a performance in the next year, and in 1571 their accounts for the pageant are thus recorded,—"Item, paid for mendynge the pagiand geyre, iij. *d*; item, paid for a yard of bokeram, xij. *d*; item, paid for payntynge the demons mall and the Maris rolles, vj. *d*; item, for makynge the roles, ij. *d*; item, paid to the players att the second stage, viij. *d*," MS. ibid. In 1572 the following were the "charges for the padgand" of the Smiths' Company,—"Paid for canvys for Jwdas coote, ij. *s*; paid for the makyng of hit, x. *d*; paid to too damsselles, xij. *d*; paid for a poollye and an yron hoke and mendyng the padgand, xvj *d*; paid for cowntters and a lase and pwyntes for Jwdas, iij. *d*," MS. Longbridge. The same company first performed in this year, 1572, their "new play," either in conjunction with or after the older pageant, as appears from the original accounts. This new drama was unquestionably an imitation of the ancient mystery. The expenses of its performance in 1573 are thus stated,—"Paid for pleyng of Petur, xvj. *d*; paid for Jwdas parte, ix. *d*; paid for ij. damsylles, xij. *d*; paid to the deman, vj. *d*; paid to iiij. men that bryng yn Herod, viij. *d*; paid to Fastoun for hangyng Jwdas, iiij. *d*; paid to Fawston for coc-croyng, iiij. *d*; paid for Mr. Wygsons gowne, viij. *d*," MS. Longbridge. It seems from the following account of the expenses of the same play in 1574 that the last entry was a payment made for the loan of a gown to be worn by the person who acted the part of Herod,—"Paid for pleynge of Petur, xvj. *d*; paid for Jwdas, ix. *d*; paid for ij. damselles, xij. *d*; paid to the deman, vj. *d*; paid to iiij. men to bryng yn Herode, viij. *d*; paid to Fawston for hangyng Jwdas and coc-croyng, viij. *d*; paid for Herodes gowne, viij. *d*," MS. ibid. In 1576 there was a payment of eighteenpence "for the gybbyt of Jezie." In 1577 the old mystery and the "new pley"

were again performed by the Smiths' Company, and threepence was paid "for a lase for Jwdas and a corde" used in the latter. The expenses of the old pageant are stated as follows,—"Paid to the plears at the fyrst reherse, ij. *s.* vj. *d*; paid for ale, iiij. *d.*; paid for Sent Marye Hall to reherse there, ij. *d*; paid for mendyng the padgand howse dore, xx. *d*; paid for too postes for the dore to stand upon, iiij. *d*; paid to the carpyntur for his labur, iiij. *d*; paid to James Beseley for ij. plattes on the post endes, vj. *d*; for great naylles to nayle on the hynge, ij. *d*; paid to vj. men to helpe up with the dore, vj. *d*," accounts of the Smiths' Company for 1577, MS. Longbridge. There was a repetition of both these performances in the following year, when the following expenses were incurred for the new play,—"Paid for the cokcroing, iiij. *d*; paid to Thomas Massy for a trwse for Judas, ij. *s.* viij. *d*; paid for a new hoke to hange Judas, vj. *d*; paid for ij. new berars of yron for the new seyt in the padgand, xij. *d*," accounts, 1578, MS. ibid. These must have been amongst the last performances at Coventry of the genuine old English mystery, which appears to have been suppressed in that city and in some other places in the year 1580; but the old dramatic taste survived, and in 1584, the theatric appliances having as yet been retained, the Smiths' Company brought out, under the sanction of the Corporation, an entirely new pageant entitled the Destruction of Jerusalem, a tragedy written by an Oxford scholar, and partially founded on events recorded by Josephus. It may be presumed that it was composed with the express object of retaining the attractions of the older performances in a form that would meet the objections of the authorities to the latter. This pageant was also acted by other companies, and appears to have been the only one allowed to be performed. With its Chorus and large number of characters, it must have been a more elaborate production than any of the ancient English mysteries, but it was acted on the pageant vehicle at different stations in the city, and no doubt with appliances similar to those used in the performances of the older dramas. It may be doubted, however, if the Destruction of Jerusalem, notwithstanding the pains bestowed upon its production, and though it was probably superior as a work of art to the old mysteries, ever achieved the popularity of the latter. It does not appear to have been exhibited again until the year 1591, when it was played with the unanimous consent of the Corporation. "It is also agreed by the whole consent of this house that the Distruccion of Jerusalem, the Conquest of the Danes or the Historie of K. E. the 4, at the request of the comons of this cittie, shal be plaid on the pagens on Midsomer Daye and St. Peters Daye next in this cittie and non other playes; and that all the meypoles that nowe are standing in this cittie shal be taken downe before Whitsonday next, and non hereafter to be sett up in this cittie,"

MS. Council-Book of Coventry, 19 May, 1591. The merry England of Shakespeare's youth was now in the course of a rapid transformation so far as the favourite recreations of the country people were concerned, and these performances in 1591 were the last representations of the Coventry pageants. Several of the companies had disposed of their vehicles and the attendant houses some years previously. Those of the Smiths' Company were parted with in 1586, and the Weavers sold their pageant in the following year, but the properties and dresses belonging to some of the companies were preserved by them for years after the termination of the performances. An inventory of the goods of the Cappers' Company, taken in 1597, includes,—"ij. pawles, sixe cressittes, ij. streamars and the poles, ij. bisshopes myters, Pylates dublit, ij. curtaynes, Pylates head, fyve Maries heades, one coyff, Mary Maudlyns gowne, iij. beardes, sixe pensils, iiij. rolles, iij. Marye boxes, one playboke, the giandes head and clubbe, Pylates clubbe, hell-mowth, Adams spade, Eves distaffe," MS. Longbridge. It may perhaps be inferred from the preservation of these relics that some of the companies still nourished the hope that the Coventry pageants would be revived. It is certain that mysteries, similar to those which had been acted in that city when Shakespeare was a boy, lingered in some parts of England till the reign of James the First. Weever, after mentioning an eight-day play in London in 1409, observes,—"the subject of the play was the Sacred Scriptures from the creation of the world; they call this Corpus Christi Play in my countrey, which I have seene acted at Preston and Lancaster, and last of all at Kendall in the beginning of the raigne of King James, for which the townesmen were sore troubled, and upon good reasons the play finally suppresst not onely there but in all other townes of the kingdome," Ancient Funerall Monuments, 1631, p. 405. The mystery of the passion acted at Ely House in the same reign (Prynne's Histrio-Mastix, 1633, p. 117) was probably one of the more elaborate religious dramas which so long maintained their popularity with the Roman Catholics. It is not likely that any of the legitimate ancient English mysteries were performed in London at so late a period, but other kinds of plays on Biblical subjects held their ground on our public stage until the early part of the seventeenth century.

Although Coventry was exceptionally celebrated for its mysteries, others of lesser importance were exhibited, during Shakespeare's boyhood, at Worcester, a city within an accessible distance from Stratford-upon-Avon. In February, 1559, the authorities of the former borough "ordeyned that the pageantes shal be dryven and played upon Corpus Christi day this yere, acordinge to the auncyent custom of this cyté," Worcester Municipal MSS. They were discontinued previously to September the 25th, 1584, on which day the Corporation "agreed

that Richard Dyrran have a lease of the vacant place where the pagantes do stand for the terme of three score and one yeares, in consyderacion that he shall buyld the same." The building erected upon this plot of ground was long known as the Pageant House, mention being made in a local account-book of a chief-rent having been paid for it under that name in the year 1738.

THE THEATRE AND CURTAIN.

These establishments, both of which are so intimately connected with the early theatrical history of Shakespeare, were situated in that division of the parish of Shoreditch which was known as the Liberty of Halliwell. This Liberty, at a later period termed Holywell, derived its name from a sacred (A.-S. halig) well or fountain which took its rise in the marshy grounds situated to the west of the high street leading from Norton Folgate to Shoreditch Church,—*mora in qua fons qui dicitur Haliwelle oritur*, charter of A.D. 1189 printed in Dugdale's Monasticon Anglicanum, ed. 1682, p. 531. In Shakespeare's time, all veneration or respect for the well had disappeared. Stow speaks of it as "much decayed and marred with filthinesse purposely layd there for the heighthening of the ground for garden plots," Survay, ed. 1598, p. 14. It has long disappeared, but it was in existence so recently as 1745, its locality being marked in the first accurate survey of the parish of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, made in that year by Chassereau.

The lands in which the holy fountain was situated belonged for many generations to the Priory of Holywell, more frequently termed Halliwell Priory in the Elizabethan documents. This institution was suppressed and its church demolished in the time of Henry the Eighth, but the priory itself, converted into private residences, was suffered to remain. The larger portion of these buildings and some of the adjoining land were purchased by one Henry Webb in 1544, and are thus described in an old manuscript index to the Patent Rolls preserved in the Record Office,—"unum messuagium cum pertinenciis infra scitum Prioratus de Halliwell, gardina cum pertinenciis, domos et edificia cum pertinenciis, et totam domum et edificia vocata *le Fratrie*, claustrum vocatum *le Cloyster* et terram fundum et solum ejusdem, gardina vocata *the Ladyes Gardens*, unum gardinum vocatum *le Prioresse Garden* et unum columbare in eodem, ortum vocatum *le Covent Orchard* continentem unam acram, et omnia horrea, domos, brasineas, etc., in tenura Johannis Foster, terram fundum et solum infra scitum predictum et ecclesie ejusdem et totam terram et solum totius capelle ibidem, totum curtilagium et terram vocatam *le Chappell Yard*, et omnia domos, edificia et gardina in tenura predicti Johannis Foster, domum vocatum *le Washinghouse* et stabulum ibidem, et totum horreum vocatum *le Oatebarne*, parcellas ejusdem Prioratus de Halliwell." A small portion of this estate, that in which the Theatre was afterwards erected, belonged

in the year 1576 to one Giles Allen. It was at this period that "James Burbage of London joyner" obtained from Allen a lease for twenty-one years, dated 13th April, 1576, of houses and land situated between Finsbury Field and the public road from Bishopsgate to Shoreditch Church. The boundary of the leased estate on the west is described as "a bricke wall next unto the feildes commonly called Finsbury Feildes." James Burbage, by early trade a joiner, but at this time also a leading member of the Earl of Leicester's company of Players, was the originator of theatrical buildings in England, for the successful promotion of which his earlier as well as his adopted profession were exactly suited. He obtained the lease referred to with this express object, with a proviso from Allen that, if he expended two hundred pounds upon the buildings already on the estate, he should be at liberty "to take downe and carrie awaie to his and their owne proper use all such buildinges and other thinges as should be builded, erected or sett upp, in or uppon the gardeines and voide grounde by the said indentures graunted, or anie parte therof, by the said Jeames, his executors or assignes, either for a theatre or playinge place, or for anie other lawefull use, for his or their commodities," Answer of Giles Allen in the suit of Burbage *v.* Allen, Court of Requests, 6th Febr., 42 Eliz. The lease was signed on April 13th, 1576, and Burbage must have commenced the erection of his theatre immediately afterwards. It was the earliest fabric of the kind ever built in this country, emphatically designated The Theatre, and by the summer of the following year it was a recognised centre of theatrical amusements. On the first of August, 1577, the Lords of the Privy Council directed a letter to be forwarded "to the L. Wentworth, Mr. of the Rolles, and Mr. Lieutenaunt of the Tower, signifieng unto them that, for thavoiding of the sicknes likelie to happen through the heate of the weather and assemblies of the people of London to playes, her Highnes plesure is that, as the L. Mayor hath taken order within the Citee, so they, imediatlie upon the receipt of their ll. lettres, shall take order with such as are and do use to play without the liberties of the Citee within that countie, as the Theater and such like, shall forbeare any more to play untill Mighelmas be past at the least, as they will aunswer to the contrarye," MS. Register of the Privy Council. The county here alluded to is Middlesex, and this is the earliest notice of the Theatre yet discovered.

There is no ancient view of the district leased to Burbage in which the Theatre is introduced, but a general notion of the aspect of the locality may be gathered from the portion of the map of Aggas in which it is included. The perspective and measurements of that plan are unfortunately inaccurate, as may be ascertained by comparing it with the more correct, but far less graphic, delineation of the same locality in Braun's map, 1574. Both Aggas and Braun undoubtedly made use of

one and the same earlier plan, but the work of the latter appears in some respects to be more scientifically executed. It is clear from Braun's map, tested by the later survey completed by Faithorne in 1658, that the eastern boundary of Finsbury Field was much nearer the highway to Shoreditch than might be inferred from the position assigned to it by Aggas. That boundary was also nearly parallel with the highway, and part of it seems to be the road or sewer which, in Aggas's map, extends from an opening on the right of the Dog-house to the lane near the spot where is to be observed a rustic with a spade on his shoulder walking towards Shoreditch. The part of the map here termed a road or sewer may have been and most likely was a line of way by the side of an open ditch, that which was afterwards the Curtain Road; a supposition all but confirmed by a survey of the bounds of Finsbury Manor, taken in 1586, where the eastern boundary of that manor hereabouts is mentioned as the "common sewer and waye" which "goethe to the playehowse called the Theater." If this be the case, the north end of this ditch was the commencement of Holywell Lane, and the brick wall on the west of the Priory buildings was exactly opposite, the position of that wall being incorrectly represented in Aggas's map. Finsbury Field certainly included the meadow in which the three windmills were situated, as appears from a survey of the manor, taken in 1567, printed in Stow's Survey of London, ed. 1633, p. 913; and it also extended to the vicinity of the Dog-house, as is seen from a notice of it in Rot. Pat. 35 Hen. VIII. pars 16. The portion of the Field which joined Burbage's estate was of course much nearer the village of Shoreditch. At the time of the erection of the Theatre there were, as will be presently seen, more houses in the neighbourhood of the Priory than are shown in either of the early plans of Braun and Aggas. Others were erected by Burbage in the immediate vicinity of the Theatre. Witnesses were asked in 1602, "whither were the said newe howses standing in the said greate yarde, and neere and alonge the late greate howse called the Theater;" and one of them deposed that "the newe houses standing in the greate yard neere and along the Theatre, and also those other newe builded houses that are on the other syde of the sayd greate yard over and against the sayd former newe builded houses, were not at the costes and charges of Gyles Allen erected, builded or sett up, as he hath heard, but were so builded by the said James Burbage about xxviij. yeares agoe." There can be no doubt that Aggas's plan was completed some years before the erection either of these houses or of the Theatre. In that plan the Royal Exchange, not completed till 1570, is introduced, but its insertion clearly appears to be the result of an alteration made in the original block some years after the completion of the latter. A similar variation is to be observed in some copies of Braun's plan, in one of which, 1574, that building is found evidently in

the same plate from which other impressions of that date, in which it does not occur, were taken. It should be borne in mind that great caution is requisite in the study of all the early London maps. Those of Aggas, Braun and Norden are the only plans of the time of Queen Elizabeth which are authentic, and care must be taken that reliable editions are consulted, there being several inaccurate copies and imitations of all of them.

When Burbage obtained the lease in 1576, it was agreed that, if he expended the sum of £200 in the way already mentioned, he should be entitled not only to take down the buildings he might erect on the gardens or vacant space, but to demand an extension of the term to 1607, provided that he laid out the money within ten years from the commencement of the tenancy. A new lease, dated 1st November, 1585, carrying out this extension, was accordingly prepared by Burbage and submitted on that day to Allen, who, however, declined to execute. The extent of the property must have been comparatively limited, consisting merely of two gardens, four houses and a large barn, as appears from the following rather curious and minute description of parcels which occurs in the proposed deed of 1585,—"all thos two howses or tenementes with thappurtenaunces which, att the tyme of the sayde former demise made, weare in the severall tenures or occupacions of Johan Harrison, widowe, and John Dragon; and also all that howse or tenement with thappurtenances, together with the gardyn grounde lyinge behinde parte of the same, beinge then likewise in the occupacion of William Garnett, gardiner, which sayd gardyn plott dothe extende in bredthe from a greate stone walle there which doth inclose parte of the gardyn, then or latlye beinge in the occupacion of the sayde Gyles, unto the gardeyne ther then in the occupacion of Ewin Colfoxe, weaver, and in lengthe from the same howse or tenement unto a bricke wall ther next unto the feildes commonly called Finsbury Feildes; and also all that howse or tenemente with thappurtenances att the tyme of the sayde former demise made called or knowne by the name of the Mill-howse, together with the gardyn grounde lyinge behinde parte of the same, also att the tyme of the sayde former dimise made beinge in the tenure or occupacion of the foresayde Ewyn Colefoxe or of his assignes, which sayde gardyn grounde dothe extende in lengthe from the same house or tenement unto the forsayde bricke wall next unto the foresayde feildes; and also all those three upper romes with thappurtenaunces next adjoyninge to the foresayde Mill-house, also beinge att the tyme of the sayde former dimise made in the occupacion of Thomas Dancaster, shomaker, or of his assignes; and also all the nether romes with thappurtenances lyinge under the same three upper romes, and next adjoyninge also to the foresayde house or tenemente called the Mill-house, then also beinge in the severall tenurs or occupacions of Alice Dotridge, widowe,

and Richarde Brockenburye or of ther assignes, together also with the gardyn grounde lyinge behynde the same, extendynge in lengthe from the same nether romes downe unto the forsayde bricke wall nexte unto the foresayde feildes, and then or late beinge also in the tenure or occupacion of the foresayde Alice Dotridge; and also so much of the grounde and soyle lyeinge and beinge afore all the tenementes or houses before graunted as extendethe in lengthe from the owtwarde parte of the foresayde tenementes, beinge at the tyme of the makinge of the sayde former dimise in the occupacion of the foresayde Johan Harryson and John Dragon, unto a ponde there beinge nexte unto the barne or stable then in the occupacion of the Right Honorable the Earle of Rutlande or of his assignes, and in bredthe from the foresayde tenemente or Mill-house to the midest of the well beinge afore the same tenementes; and also all that great barne with thappurtenances att the tyme of the makinge of the sayde former dimise made beinge in the severall occupacions of Hughe Richardes, inholder, and Robert Stoughton, butcher; and also a little peece of grounde then inclosed with a pale and next adjoyninge to the foresayde barne, and then or late before that in the occupacion of the sayde Roberte Stoughton; together also with all the grounde and soyle lyinge and beinge betwene the sayde neyther romes last before expressed and the foresayde greate barne and the foresayde ponde, that is to saye, extendinge in lengthe from the foresayde ponde unto a ditche beyonde the brick wall nexte the foresayde feildes; and also the sayde Gyles Allen and Sara his wyfe doe by thes presentes dimise, graunte and to farme lett, unto the sayde Jeames Burbage, all the right, title and interest which the sayde Gyles and Sara have, or ought to have, of, in or to all the groundes and soile lyeinge betwene the foresayde greate barne and the barne being at the tyme of the sayde former dimise in the occupacion of the Earle of Rutlande or of his assignes, extendeinge in lengthe from the foresayde ponde and from the foresayde stable or barne then in the occupacion of the foresayde Earle of Rutlande, or of his assignes, downe to the foresayde bricke wall next the foresayde feildes; and also the sayde Gyles and Sara doe by thes presentes demise, graunt and to fearme let to the sayde Jeames, all the sayde voide grounde lieynge and beinge betwixt the foresayde ditche and the foresayde brick wall, extendinge in lenght[s] from the foresayde brick wall which incloseth parte of the foresayde garden, beinge att the tyme of the makinge of the sayde former demise, or late before that, in the occupacion of the sayde Giles Allen, unto the foresayde barne then in the occupacion of the foresayde Earle or of his assignes." This description is identical with that given in the lease of 1576, as appears from a recital in the Coram Rege Rolls, Easter 44 Elizabeth, R. 257.

There is no doubt that the estate above described formed a portion of that which was purchased by Webb in 1544, and belonged to Allen in

1576, for in a paper in a suit instituted many years afterwards respecting "a piece of void ground" on the eastern boundary of the property leased to Burbage we are informed that Henry the Eighth granted to Henry Webb "a greate parte of the scite of the said Pryorie, and namely amongst other thinges all those barnes, stables, bruehowses, gardens and all other buildinges whatsoever, with theire appurtenaunces, lyinge and beinge within the scite, walles and precincte of the said Pryorye, on the west parte of the said Priorye within the lower gate of the said Priorye, and all the ground and soyle by any wayes included within the walles and precincte of the said priorye extendinge from the said lower gate, of which ground the sayd yarde or peece of void ground into which it is supposed that the said Cuthbert Burbage hath wrongfully entered is parcell." This important evidence enables us to identify the exact locality of the Burbage estate, the southern boundary of which extended from the western side of the lower gate of the Priory to Finsbury Fields, the brick wall separating the latter from Burbage's property being represented in Aggas's map in a north-east direction from Holywell Lane on the west of the Priory buildings, though, as previously stated, the wall is placed in that map too near Shoreditch. The rustic with the spade on his shoulder who, in Aggas's view, is represented as walking towards Holywell Lane, is at a short distance from the south-western corner of Burbage's property. Somewhere near that corner the Theatre was undoubtedly situated. This opinion is confirmed by Stow, who, in his Survay of London, ed. 1598, p 349, thus writes, speaking of the Priory,—"the Church being pulled downe, many houses have bene their builded for the lodgings of noblemen, of straungers borne and other; and neare thereunto are builded two publique houses for the acting and shewe of comedies, tragedies and histories, for recreation, whereof the one is called the Courtein, the other the Theatre, both standing on the south-west side towards the Field," that is, Finsbury Field. The lower gate, mentioned in the record above quoted, was on the north side of Holywell Lane, and in a deposition taken in 1602, it is stated that the "Earle of Rutland and his assignes did ordinarily at theire pleasures chayne and barre up the lane called Holloway Lane leading from the greate streete of Shordich towardes the fieldes along before the gate of the said Pryory, and so kept the same so cheyned and barred up as a private foote way, and that the same lane then was not used as a common highway for carte or carriage." Other witnesses assert that no one was allowed "to passe with horse or carte" unless he had the Earl's special permission. It is, perhaps, not to be concluded from these statements that persons were not allowed to drive carts through the lane, but simply that the Earl took the ordinary precautions to retain it legally as a private road. The lower gate, though indistinctly rendered, may be observed in Aggas's map on the south of the west end of the Priory

buildings, and upon land situated to the north-west of this gate the Theatre was erected. All this locality is now so completely altered, it being a dense assemblage of modern buildings, that hardly any real archæological interest attaches to it. The position of the Theatre, however, can be indicated with a near approach to accuracy. The ruins of the Priory were still visible in the last century in King John's Court on the north of Holywell Lane, and were incorrectly but popularly known as the remains of King John's Palace (Maitland's History of London, ed. 1739, p. 771). The ruins have disappeared, but the Court is still in existence, a circumstance which enables us to identify the locality of the Priory. It appears, therefore, from the evidences above cited, that the Theatre must have been situated a little to the north of Holywell Lane, and as nearly as possible on the site of what is now Deanes Mews. Excavations made a few years ago for a railway, which passes over some of the ground upon which the Priory stood, uncovered the remains of the stone-work of one of the ancient entrance doors, and these few relics are most probably the only vestiges remaining of what was once the thriving and somewhat important Priory of Holywell.

Although the Theatre must have been situated near some of the houses on the Burbage estate, it was practically in the fields, as is ascertained from indisputable evidences. Stockwood, in August, 1578, speaks of it as "the gorgeous playing place erected in the fieldes." Fleetwood, writing to Lord Burghley in June, 1584, says,—"that night I retorned to London, and found all the wardes full of watches; the cause thereof was for that *very nere* the Theatre or Curten, at the tyme of the playes, there laye a prentice sleping *upon the grasse*, and one Challes alias Grostock dyd turne upon the too upon the belly of the same prentice, wherupon the apprentice start up, and after wordes they fell to playne blowes,"—MS. Lansd. 41. The neighbourhood of the Theatre was occasionally visited by the common hangman, a circumstance which proves that there was an open space near the building. It is stated in the True Report of the Inditement of Weldon, Hartley and Sutton, who suffred for High Treason, 1588, that "after Weldons execution the other prisoners were brought to Hollywell, nigh the Theater, where Hartley was to suffer." In Tarlton's Newes Out of Purgatorie, 1590, that celebrated actor is represented as knowing that the performance at the Theatre was finished when he "saw such concourse of people through the Fields;" and when Peter Streete removed the building in 1599, he was accused by Allen of injuring the neighbouring grass to the value of fourty shillings. There is a similar allusion to the *herba Cutberti* in proceedings in Burbage v. Ames, Coram Rege Roll, Hil. 41 Elizabeth, a suit respecting a small piece of land in the immediate locality. The Theatre was originally built on enclosed ground, but a pathway or road was afterwards made from it into the

open fields; for a witness deposed, in 1602, that "shee doth not knowe anie ancient way into the fieldes but a way, used after the building of the Theatre, which leadeth into the fieldes."

The quotation above given from Tarlton's Newes out of Purgatorie, 1590, shows that the usual access to the Theatre was through Finsbury Fields. There was certainly no regular path to it through the Lower Gate of the Priory, the old plans of the locality exhibiting its site as enclosed ground; and according to one witness, whose evidence was taken in 1602, Allen, previously to the erection of the Theatre, had no access to his premises from the south, but merely from the east and north. The testimony here alluded to was given in reply to the following interrogatory,—"whither had not the said Allen his servauntes, and such other tenauntes as he had, before those said newe buildinges were sett up and before the Theater was builded, their ordinarie waie of going and coming in and out to his howse onely through that place or neere or over againste that place wheare the Theater stood into feildes and streetes, and not anie other waie, and how long is it since he or his did use anie other waie, as you knowe or have heard?" Mary Hobblethwayte, of Shoreditch, who gave her age as seventy-six or thereabouts, deposed "that the said Allen his servauntes and tenentes, before those newe buildinges were sett up, and before the Theatre was builded, had theire ordinary way of going and coming to and from his house onely through a way directly towardes the North, inclosed on both sydes with a brick wall, leading to a Crosse neere unto the well called Dame Agnes a Cleeres Well, and that the way made into the fieldes from the Theatre was made since the Theatre was builded, as shee remembreth, and that the said Allen his servauntes and tenauntes had not any other way other then the way leading from his house to the High Streete of Shordich." On the other hand, there were witnesses examined at the same time who asserted that Allen had access to the fields by a path through or near the site of the Theatre before that building was erected. Leonard Jackson, aged eighty, declared "that the said Allen his servauntes and others his tenauntes had, before those newe buildinges were sett up, and before the Theatre was builded, the ordinary way of going and comming in and out to his house through that place, or neere or over against that place where the Theatre stoode, and that he and they had also another way through his greate orchard into the High Streete of Shorditch, and that he hath used that way some xxx. yeares or xxxv. yeares or thereaboutes." Still more in detail but to a like effect is the deposition of John Rowse, aged fifty-five, who stated that "the saide Allen his servauntes and other tenauntes there had, before those his newe buildinges were sett up and before the Theatre was builded, theire ordinary waie coming and going in and out to his house onely through that place, or neere or over against that place where the saide Theatre stoode into the fieldes, and that nowe

and then he and some of his tenauntes did come in and out at the greate gate, and he doth remember this to be true, bycause that the said Allen nowe and then at his going into the country from Hollowell did give this examinates father, being appointed porter of the house by his Lord Henry Earle of Rutland, for his paines, sometymes iij.*s*, sometymes iiij.*s*, and further he saieth that he hath knowne the said Allen and his servauntes use another way from his house through his long orchard into Hollowell Streete or Shorditch Streete, and this waie as he this examinate remembreth some xxx.ty yeares or thereaboutes." It must be borne in mind that the property affected by the rights of way investigated in these evidences consisted of the whole of Allen's estate before Burbage was his lessee.

It appears from Hobblethwayte's evidence that, after the Theatre was built, there was a road or path made from it on the west side into the fields. This road or path must have been made through the brick wall on the eastern boundary of Finsbury Fields, as is ascertained from a clause in the proposed lease from Allen to Burbage, 1585, and from an unpublished account of the boundaries of Finsbury Manor written in 1586, in which, after mentioning that the bounds of the manor on the south passed along the road which divided More Field from Mallow Field, the latter being the one to the east of the grounds of Finsbury Court, the writer proceeds to describe them as follows,—"and so alonge by the southe ende of the gardens adjoyninge to More Feld into a diche of watter called the common sewer which runnethe into More Diche, and from thence the same diche northewarde alonge one theaste side the gardens belonginge to John Worssopp, and so alonge one theaste side of twoo closes of the same John Worssopp, nowe in the occupacion of Thomas Lee thelder, buttcher, for which gardens and closses the said John Worssopp payed the quit rent to the mannor of Fynsbury, as aperethe by the recorde; and so the same boundes goe over the highe waye close by a barren lately builded by one Niccolles, includinge the same barren, and so northe as the Common Sewer and waye goethe to the playehowse called the Theater, and so tournethe by the same common sewer to Dame Agnes the Clere." The evidence of Hobblethwayte is confirmed by the testimony of Anne Thornes, of Shoreditch, aged seventy-four, who deposed,—"that shee cannott remember that Allen his servauntes or tenauntes had, before the said new buildinges were sett up or before the said Theatre was builded, theire ordinary way of going and comming unto his house onely through that place where the Theatre stoode into the fieldes, or neere or over against that place; but shee hath heard that, since the building of the Theatre, there is a way made into the fieldes, and that the said Allen and his tenauntes have for a long tyme used another way out of the sayd scite of the Priory that the said Allen holdeth into the High Streete of Shorditch." Rowse's evidence

proves that there could have been no regular access to the locality of the Theatre through the lower gate of the Priory in Holywell Lane, and very few indeed of the audience could have used the path which entered Allen's property to the north from the well of St. Agnes le Clair, which latter was not in the direction of any road used by persons coming from London. It follows that, in Shakespeare's time, the chief if not the only line of access to the Theatre was across the fields which lay to the west of the western boundary wall of the grounds of the dissolved Priory, and through those meadows, therefore, nearly all the stage-loving citizens would arrive at their destination, most of them on foot, but some no doubt riding "into the fieldes playes to behold," Davis's Epigrammes, 1599. This question of their route is not a subject of mere topographical curiosity, the conclusion here reached increasing the probability of there being some foundation for the tradition recorded by Davenant.

The Theatre appears to have been a very favourite place of amusement, especially with the more unruly section of the populace. There are several allusions to its crowded audiences and to the license which occasionally attended the entertainments, the disorder sometimes penetrating into the City itself. "By reason no playes were the same daye, all the Citie was quiet," observes the writer of a letter in June, 1584, MS.Lansd.41. Stockwood, in a Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse the 24 of August, 1578, indignantly asks,—"wyll not a fylthye playe wyth the blast of a trumpette sooner call thyther a thousande than an houres tolling of a bell bring to the sermon a hundred?—nay, even heere in the Citie, without it be at this place and some other certaine ordinarie audience, where shall you finde a reasonable company?—whereas, if you resorte to the Theatre, the Curtayne and other places of playes in the Citie, you shall on the Lords Day have these places, with many other that I cannot recken, so full as possible they can throng;" and, in reference again to the desecration of the Sunday at the Theatre, he says,—"if playing in the Theatre or any other place in London, as there are by sixe that I know to many, be any of the Lordes wayes, whiche I suppose there is none so voide of knowledge in the world wil graunt, then not only it may but ought to be used; but if it be any of the wayes of man, it is no work for the Lords sabaoth, and therfore in no respecte tollerable on that daye." It was upon a Sunday, two years afterwards, in April, 1580, that there was a great disturbance at the same establishment, thus noticed in a letter from the Lord Mayor to the Privy Council dated April 12th,—"where it happened on Sundaie last that some great disorder was committed at the Theatre, I sent for the undershireve of Middlesex to understand the cercumstances, to the intent that by myself or by him I might have caused such redresse to be had as in dutie and discretion I might, and therefore did also send for the plaiers to have apered afore me, and the rather because those playes

doe make assembles of cittizens and there familes of whome I have charge; but forasmuch as I understand that your Lordship, with other of hir Majesties most honorable Counsell, have entered into examination of that matter, I have surceassed to procede further, and do humbly refer the whole to your wisdomes and grave considerations; howbeit, I have further thought it my dutie to informe your Lordship, and therewith also to beseche to have in your honorable rememberance, that the players of playes which are used at the Theatre and other such places, and tumblers and such like, are a very superfluous sort of men and of suche facultie as the lawes have disalowed, and their exersise of those playes is a great hinderaunce of the service of God, who hath with His mighty hand so lately admonished us of oure earnest repentance," City of London MSS. The Lord Mayor here of course alludes to the great earthquake which had occurred a few days previously. In June, 1584, there was a disturbance just outside the Theatre, thus narrated in a letter to Lord Burghley,—"uppon Weddensdaye one Browne, a serving man in a blew coat, a shifting fellowe, havinge a perrelous witt of his owne, entending a sport if he cold have browght it to passe, did at Theater doore querell with certen poore boyes, handicraft prentises, and strooke somme of theym; and lastlie he, with his sword, wondeid and maymed one of the boyes upon the left hand, whereupon there assembled nere a thousand people;—this Browne dyd very cuninglie convey hymself awaye." The crowds of disorderly people frequenting the Theatre are thus alluded to in Tarlton's Newes out of Purgatorie, 1590,—"upon Whitson monday last I would needs to the Theatre to see a play, where, when I came, I founde such concourse of unrulye people that I thought it better solitary to walk in the fields then to intermeddle myselfe amongst such a great presse." In 1592, there was an apprehension that the London apprentices might indulge in riots on Midsummer-night, in consequence of which the following order was issued by the Lords of the Council,—"moreover for avoydinge of thes unlawfull assemblies in those quarters, yt is thoughte meete yow shall take order that there be noe playes used in anye place nere thereaboutes, as the Theator, Curtayne or other usuall places there where the same are comonly used, nor no other sorte of unlawfull or forbidden pastymes that drawe togeather the baser sorte of people, from henceforth untill the feast of St. Michaell," MS. Register of the Privy Council, 23rd June, 1592. Another allusion to the throngs of the lower orders attracted by the entertainments at the Theatre occurs in a letter from the Lord Mayor to the Privy Council, dated 13th September, 1595,—"among other inconvenyences it is not the least that the refuse sort of evill disposed and ungodly people about this Cytie have oportunitie hearby to assemble together and to make their matches for all their lewd and ungodly practizes, being also the ordinary places for all maisterles

men and vagabond persons that haunt the high waies to meet together and to recreate themselfes, whearof wee begin to have experienc again within these fiew daies since it pleased her highnes to revoke her comission graunted forthe to the Provost Marshall, for fear of home they retired themselfes for the time into other partes out of his precinct, but ar now retorned to their old haunt, and frequent the plaies, as their manner is, that ar daily shewed at the Theator and Bankside, whearof will follow the same inconveniences, whearof wee have had to much experienc heartofore, for preventing whearof wee ar humble suters to your good Ll. and the rest to direct your lettres to the Justices of Peac of Surrey and Middlesex for the present stay and finall suppressing of the said plaies, as well at the Theator and Bankside as in all other places about the Cytie." It is clear from these testimonies that the Theatre attracted a large number of persons of questionable character to the locality, thus corroborating what has been previously stated respecting the degree of responsibility attached to those who undertook the care of the horses belonging to the more respectable portion of the audience.

Two years afterwards, the inconveniences attending the performances at the Shoreditch theatres culminated in an order of the Privy Council for their suppression, a decree which, like several others of a like kind emanating from the same body, was disregarded. The order appeared in the form of a letter to the Justices of Middlesex dated July 28th, 1597, the contents of which are recorded as follows in the Council Register,—"Her Majestie being informed that there are verie greate disorders committed in the common playhouses both by lewd matters that are handled on the stages, and by resorte and confluence of bad people, hathe given direction that not onlie no plaies shal be used within London or about the Citty, or in any publique place, during this tyme of sommer, but that also those playhouses that are erected and built only for suche purposes shal be plucked downe, namelie the Curtayne and the Theatre nere to Shorditch, or any other within that county; theis are therfore in her Majesties name to chardge and commaund you that you take present order there be no more plaies used in any publique place within three myles of the Citty untill Alhallontide next, and likewyse that you do send for the owner of the Curtayne, Theatre or anie other common playhouse, and injoyne them by vertue hereof forthwith to plucke downe quite the stages, galleries and roomes that are made for people to stand in, and so to deface the same as they maie not be ymploied agayne to suche use, which yf they shall not speedely performe you shall advertyse us, that order maie be taken to see the same don according to her Majesties pleasure and commaundment." This order appears to have been issued in consequence of representations made by the Lord Mayor in a letter written on the same day to the Privy Council, in which he observes,—"wee have fownd by

th'examination of divers apprentices and other servantes, whoe have confessed unto us that the saide staige-playes were the very places of theire randevous appoynted by them to meete with such otheir as wear to joigne with them in theire designes and mutinus attemptes, beeinge allso the ordinarye places for maisterles men to come together to recreate themselves, for avoydinge wheareof wee are nowe againe most humble and earnest suitors to your honors to dirrect your lettres as well to ourselves, as to the Justices of Peace of Surrey and Midlesex, for the present staie and fynall suppressinge of the saide stage-playes as well at the Theatre, Curten and Banckside, as in all other places in and abowt the Citie," City of London MSS. The players up to this time had wisely erected all their regular theatres in the suburbs, the Mayor and Corporation of the City having been virulently opposed to the drama.

The crowds which flocked to places of entertainment were reasonably supposed to increase the danger of the spread of infection during the prevalence of an epidemic, and the Theatre and Curtain were sometimes ordered to be closed on that account. The Lord Mayor of London in a letter to Sir Francis Walsingham, dated May 3rd, 1583, thus writes in reference to the plague,—"among other we finde one very great and dangerous inconvenience, the assemblie of people to playes, beare-bayting, fencers and prophane spectacles at the Theatre and Curtaine and other like places, to which doe resorte great multitudes of the basist sort of people and many enfected with sores runing on them, being out of our jurisdiction, and some whome we cannot descerne by any dilligence and which be otherwise perilous for contagion, biside the withdrawing from Gods service, the peril of ruines of so weake byldinges, and the avancement of incontinencie and most ungodly confederacies," City of London MSS. In the spring of the year 1586 plays at the Theatre were prohibited for the first of these reasons, as appears from the following note in the Privy Council Register under the date of May 11th,—"A lettre to the L. Maior; his l. is desired, according to his request made to their Lordshippes by his lettres of the vij.th of this present, to geve order for the restrayning of playes and interludes within and about the Cittie of London, for th'avoyding of infection feared to grow and increase this tyme of sommer by the comon assemblies of people at those places, and that their Lordshippes have taken the like order for the prohibiting of the use of playes at the Theater and th'other places about Newington out of his charge,"—MS. Register of the Privy Council.

The preceding documents of July, 1597, contain the latest notice of the Theatre in connexion with dramatic entertainments which has yet been discovered. It is alluded to in Skialetheia, published in the following year, 1598, as being then closed,—"but see yonder=One, like the unfrequented Theater,=Walkes in darke silence and vast

solitude." James Burbage on September 17th, 1579, assigned his Shoreditch estate to one John Hyde, who held it till June 7th, 1589 (Coram Rege Rolls, 44 Eliz.), upon which day the latter surrendered his interest in it to Cuthbert Burbage. The assignment to Hyde may have been a security for a loan. At all events, James Burbage appears to have retained the legal estate and to have continued to deal with the property, so far as litigation was concerned, as if it were his own, and at the time of his death, which took place early in 1597, he was involved in a law-suit respecting it, this circumstance so embarrassing his successors that they found it difficult to carry on the management of the Theatre. According to a statement made by the family to Lord Pembroke in 1635, James Burbage "was the first builder of playhowses, and was himselfe in his younger yeeres a player; the Theater hee built with many hundred poundes taken up at interest; hee built this house upon leased ground, by which meanes the landlord and hee had a great suite in law, and, by his death, the like troubles fell on us, his sonnes." There is some difficulty in reconciling the various statements respecting the devolution of the estate, but the one most likely to be correct is that made by Allen, who asserted that James Burbage, previously to his decease, made a deed of gift of the property to his two sons, Cuthbert and Richard.

It is worth recording that, shortly before the death of the elder Burbage in 1597, negociations were pending with Allen for a considerable extension of the lease, with a stipulation, however, assigning a limited period only for the continuation of theatrical amusements. Allen's statement is that "the said Jeames Burbage grewe to a newe agreement that the said Jeames Burbage should have a newe lease of the premisses conteyned in the former lease for the terme of one and twenty yeares, to beginne after the end and expiracion of the former lease, for the yearlie rent of foure and twentie powndes, for the said Jeames Burbage, in respect of the great proffitt and commoditie which he had made and in time then to come was further likelye to make of the Theatre and the other buildinges and growndes to him demised, was verye willinge to paie tenn powndes yearelye rent more then formerlie he paid; and it was likewise further agreed betweene them, as the defendant hopeth he shall sufficientlie prove, that the said Theatre should continue for a playinge place for the space of five yeares onelie after the expiracion of the first terme and not longer, by reason that the defendant sawe that many inconveniences and abuses did growe therby, and that after the said five yeares ended it should be converted by the said Jeames Burbage and the complainant or one of them to some other use," Answer of Gyles Allen in the suit of Burbage v. Allen, Court of Requests, 42 Eliz. Cuthbert Burbage, in his replication, denies that his father consented to entertain the suggestion "that the said Theater

should contynue for a playinge place for the space of fyve yeres onelie after the first terme and no longer." In confirmation, however, of Allen's version of the facts, there is the testimony of a witness named Thomas Nevill, who positively declared that "there was an agreemente had betweene them, the said complainante and the said defendantes, for the howses and grownde with the Theatre which were formerlye demised unto Jeames Burbage, the father of the said complainante, with an increasinge of the rente from fourteene powndes by the yeare unto foure and twentye powndes by the yeare, which lease should beginn at the expiracion of the ould lease made unto the said complainantes father, and should continue for the space of one and twentye yeares; and this deponente further saieth that the said defendant was at the firste verrye unwillinge that the said Theatre should continue one daie longer for a playinge place, yet neverthelesse at the laste he yealded that it should continue for a playinge place for certaine yeares, and that the said defendante did agree that the said complainante should after those yeares expired converte the said Theatre to his beste benifitt for the residue of the said terme then to come, and that afterward it should remaine to the onelye use of the defendante," MS. Depositions in the suit of Burbage v. Allen taken at Kelvedon, co. Essex, in August, 1600.

The year 1597 was a critical one for the Burbages in respect to their Shoreditch estate. The original lease given by Allen expired in the Spring, and they could not succeed in obtaining a legal ratification of the additional ten years covenanted to be granted to the lessee, although they were still permitted to remain as tenants. Bewildered by this uncertainty of the tenure, they resolved in the following year not only to abandon the Theatre, but to take advantage of a condition in the lease of 1576, and remove the building with the whole of the materials, a step which had at least the advantage of throwing the initiative of further litigation upon Allen. The stipulation in that lease has already been given, and Streete expressly declares that it was originally intended that the same clause should form a part of the extended one,—"et ulterius predicti Egidius Alleyn et Sara uxor ejus convenerunt et concesserunt, pro seipsis, heredibus, executoribus et assignatis suis, et quilibet eorum separatim convenit et concessit prefato Jacobo Burbage, executoribus et assignatis suis, quod licitum foret eidem Jacobo, executoribus seu assignatis suis, in consideratione impenditionis et expositionis predictarum ducentarum librarum, modo et forma predicta, ad aliquod tempus et tempora ante finem predicti termini viginti et unius annorum per predictam indenturam concessi, aut ante finem predicti termini viginti et unius annorum post confectionem indenture predicte, virtute ejusdem indenture concedendi, habere, diruere et abcariare ad ejus aut eorum proprium,usum imperpetuum omnia talia edificia et omnes alias res qualia edificata erecta aut supposita forent,

Anglice *sett upp*, in et super gardino et locis vacuis, Anglice *the grownde*, per indenturam predictam concessa, aut aliqua parte inde, per predictum Jacobum executores vel assignatos suos, aut pro theatro vocato *a theater or playinge place*, aut pro aliquo alio licito usu pro ejus aut eorum commoditate." It is accordingly found that the stipulation is inserted as follows in the proposed lease of 1585,—"and further the sayde Gyles Allen and Sara his wyfe for them, their heres, executors and administrators, doe covenante and graunte, and every of them severally covenanteth and graunteth, to and with the sayde Jeames Burbage, his executors and assignes, by thes presentes, that yt shall or may be lawfull for the sayde Jeames Burbage, his executors or assignes, in consideracion for the imployinge and bestowinge of the foresayde some of cc.*li.* mencioned in the sayde former indenture, at any tyme or tymes before the ende of the sayde terme of xxj. yeares by thes presentes granted, to have, take downe and carrye awaye, to his and their owne proper use for ever, all such buildinges and other thinges as are alredye builded, erected and sett upp, and which hereafter shal be builded erected or sett upp in or upon the gardings and voyde grounds by thes presentes graunted, or any parte therof, by the sayde Jeames, his executors or assignes, eyther for a theater or playinge place, or for any other lawfull use for his or theire comodityes." It is unnecessary to enter further into a discussion on the legal intricacies which arose in the suits between the parties, the only topics of present interest in the voluminous proceedings being those which throw light on the history of the Theatre. It was Allen's intention, to use his own words, "seeing the greate and greevous abuses that grewe by the Theater, to pull downe the same and to converte the wood and timber therof to some better use;" but in this design he was anticipated by the Burbages, who engaged one Peter Street, a builder and carpenter, to remove the building, which operation was accordingly effected either in December, 1598, or in January, 1599.

The narrative given by Allen of the demolition of the Theatre and the removal of the "wood and timber" to Southwark, where they were afterwards used in the construction of the Globe, is particularly interesting. As has just been stated, Allen had himself contemplated the destruction of the Theatre and the conversion of its materials to some other use, but Cuthbert Burbage, anticipating the design,—"unlawfullye combyninge and confederating himselfe with the sayd Richard Burbage and one Peeter Streat, William Smyth and divers other persons, to the number of twelve, to your subjcct unknowne, did aboute the eight and twentyth daye of December in the one and fortyth yeere of your Highnes raygne, and sythence your highnes last and generall pardon by the confederacye aforesayd, ryoutouslye assemble themselves together, and then and there armed themselves with dyvers and manye unlawfull

and offensive weapons, as, namelye, swordes, daggers, billes, axes and such like, and soe armed, did then repayre unto the sayd Theater, and then and there, armed as aforesayd, in verye ryotous, outragious and forcyble manner, and contrarye to the lawes of your highnes realme, attempted to pull downe the sayd Theater; whereuppon divers of your subjectes, servauntes and farmers, then goinge aboute in peaceable manner to procure them to desist from that their unlawfull enterpryse, they, the sayd ryotous persons aforesayd, notwithstanding procured® then therein with greate vyolence, not onlye then and there forcyblye and ryotouslye resisting your subjectes, servauntes and farmers, but allso then and there pulling, breaking and throwing downe the sayd Theater in verye outragious, violent and riotous sort, to the great disturbance and terrefyeing not onlye of your subjectes sayd servauntes and farmers, but of divers others of your Majesties loving subjectes there neere inhabitinge; and having so done, did then alsoe in most forcible and ryotous manner take and carrye awaye from thence all the wood and timber therof unto the Bancksyde in the parishe of St. Marye Overyes, and there erected a newe playehowse with the sayd timber and woode," Bill of Complaint, Allen v. Burbage, 44 Eliz.

The date here assigned to the removal of the Theatre is December 28th, 1598; but, according to another authority, the event took place on January 20th, 1599, the possibility being that the operation was not completed on the first occasion. The other account to which reference is here made is in the following terms,—"Egidius Aleyn armiger queritur de Petro Strete, in custodia marescalli marescallie domine Regine coram ipsa Regina existente, de eo quod ipse, vicesimo die Januarij anno regni domine Elizabethe nunc Regine Anglie quadragesimo primo, vi et armis &c. clausum ipsius Egidii vocatum *the Inner Courte Yarde*, parcellam nuper monasterii prioratus de Hallywell modo dissoluti apud Hallywell, fregit et intravit, et herbam ipsius Egidii ad valenciam quadraginta solidorum adtunc in clauso predicto crescentem pedibus suis ambulando conculcavit et consumpsit; et quandam structuram ipsius Egidii ibidem fabricatam et erectam vocatam *the Theater* ad valenciam septingentarum librarum adtunc et ibidem diruit, divulsit, cepit et abcariavit, et alia enormia ei intulit contra pacem dicte domine Regine ad dampnum ipsius Egidii octingentarum librarum," Coram Rege Rolls, 42 Eliz. The Inner Court Yard was situated to the west of the Lower Gate, as appears from other evidences. In an Answer filed in a suit in the Court of Requests, February, 1600, Allen declares that he was absent in the country at the time of the removal of the building, the date of that event which is given in this Answer certainly being erroneous. According to the defendant's statement, Cuthbert Burbage "sought to take occasion when he might privilie and for his best advantage pull downe the said Theatre, which aboute the Feast of

the Nativitie of our Lord God in the fourtith yeare of her Majesties raigne he hath caused to be done without the privitie or consent of the defendant, he beinge then in the countrie." A mistake is here made in the number of the regnal year. There can be no doubt of the fact that it was in the course of the month of December, 1598, or January, 1599, that the greater portion at least of the Theatre was removed, but it may be questioned if Burbage's agents had succeeded in carrying away the whole of the materials of the structure. At all events, in January, 1600, he speaks of having taken away only "parte of the building." In his Bill against Allen in the Court of Requests, referring to the expectation that the defendant intended ultimately to renew the original lease for ten years, he observes,—"by reason wherof your subjecte did forbeare to pull downe and carie awaye the tymber and stuffe ymployed for the said Theater and playinge house at the ende of the saide first tearme of one and twentie yeares, as by the directe covenaunte and agreemente expressed in the saide indenture he mighte have done; but after the saide firste tearme of one and twentie yeares ended the saide Alleyne hathe suffred your subjecte to contynue in possession of the premisses for diverse yeares, and hathe accepted the rente reserved by the saide indenture from your subjecte, wheruppon of late your saide subjecte, havinge occasion to use certayne tymber and other stuffe which weare ymploied in makinge and errectinge the saide Theator uppon the premisses, beinge the cheefeste proffitte that your subjecte hoped for in the bargayne therof, did to that purpose, by the consente and appointmente of Ellen Burbadge, administratrix of the goodes and chattells of the saide James Burbage, take downe and carie awaye parte of the saide newe buildinge, as by the true meaninge of the saide indenture and covenauntes lawfull was for him to doe, and the same did ymploye to other uses." In another part of the same bill, however, he alludes to Peter Street, who by his "direction and comaundment did enter uppon the premisses and take downe the saide buildinge;" and Street himself admitted the fact in his Answer to a suit of trespass brought against him by Allen early in 1599,—"et quoad venire vi et armis, ac tot et quicquid quod est suppositum fieri contra pacem dicte domine Regine nunc, preter fractionem et intracionem in clausum predictum et herbe predicte conculcationem et consumptionem, necnon diruptionem, divulsionem, captionem et abcariationem predicte structure vocate *the Theater*, idem Petrus dicit quod ipse in nullo est inde culpabilis." The second statement of Cuthbert Burbage on the subject, in his replication in the suit of Burbage v. Allen, April, 1600, which perhaps may be considered of better authority than his previous account, seems to confirm the evidence given by Street,—"and this complainant doth not denie but that he hathe pulled downe the said Theatre, which this complainant taketh it was laufull for him so to do, beinge a thinge

covenaunted and permitted in the said former léas." Whether any remains of the Theatre were left standing or not, it is certain that the building, so far as it is connected with the history of the stage, may be considered to have been removed by the month of January, 1599.

A few of the dramas which were performed at the Theatre are mentioned by contemporary writers. Gosson, in his Schoole of Abuse, 1579, speaks of,—"the Blacksmiths Daughter and Catilins Conspiracies, usually brought in to the Theater; the firste contayning the trechery of Turkes, the honourable bountye of a noble minde, and the shining of vertue in distresse; the last, bicause it is knowen too be a pig of myne owne sowe, I will speake the lesse of it, onely giving you to understand that the whole marke which I shot at in that woorke was too showe the rewarde of traytors in Catilin, and the necessary government of learned men in the person of Cicero, which forsees every danger that is likely to happen, and forstalles it continually ere it take effect." The Play of Plays, a moral drama in defence of plays, was acted at the same establishment in February, 1581–2,—"the Playe of Playes showen at the Theater the three and twentieth of Februarie last," Gosson's Playes Confuted in Five Actions, n. d. Another kind of performance had been selected on the previous day, as appears from the following obscure notice in a contemporary journal preserved in MS. Addit. 5008,—"1582. Feb. 22, we went to the Theater to se a scurvie play set owt al by one Virgin, which ther proved a fyemarten without voice, so that we stayd not the matter." A marginal note describes this mysterious entertainment as "a virgin play." About this period "the history of Cæsar and Pompey and the playe of the Fabii" were acted at the same place, as we are told by Gosson in his Plays Confuted; and mention is made in the same work of "that glosing plaie at the Theater which profers you so faire," but in which there was "enterlaced a baudie song of a maide of Kent and a litle beastly speach of the new stawled roge, both which I am compelled to burie in silence, being more ashamed to utter them then they; for as in tragedies some points are so terrible that the poets are constrayned to turne them from the peoples eyes, so in the song of the one, the speache of the other, somewhat is so dishonest that I cannot with honestie repeate it," sig. D. 6. Some years afterwards, Lodge, in his Wits Miserie, 1596, speaks of one who "looks as pale as the visard of the ghost which cries so miserally[®] at the Theator, like an oister-wife, *Hamlet, revenge;*" and Barnaby Rich, in 1606, alludes to "Gravets part at the Theatre" as having been a celebrated performance. Marlowe's Doctor Faustus was also acted at the same house. "He had a head of hayre like one of my divells in Dr. Faustus, when the olde Theatre crackt and frighted the audience," Blacke Booke, 1604. The passage in Lodge refers to the old play of Hamlet, which then belonged to, and was no doubt occasionally performed by, Shakespeare's company.

According to the account previously quoted from Stow's Survay of London, ed. 1598, p. 349, the Curtain Theatre and the building removed in 1599, the latter distinctively termed the Theatre, were in the same locality. They are both described as being near the site of the dissolved priory, and "both standing on the south-west side towards the Field." The Curtain Theatre, however, was situated on the southern side of Holywell Lane, a little to the westward of the two trees which are seen in Aggas's view in the middle of a field adjoining Holywell Lane. In a document preserved at the Privy Council Office, dated in 1601, this theatre is spoken of as "the Curtaine in Moorefeildes," which shows that it was on the south of that lane. Stow, ed. 1598, p. 351, speaks of Moorfields as extending in ancient times to Holywell, but the fields usually so called in the days of Shakespeare did not reach so far to the north, so that the description of 1601 must be accepted with some qualification. The Curtain Theatre, as is ascertained by Stow's decisive testimony, could not possibly have stood much to the south of the lane. It must in fact have been situated in or near the place which is marked as Curtain Court in Chassereau's plan of Shoreditch, 1745. This Court was afterwards called Gloucester Row, and it is now known as Gloucester Street.

This last-named theatre derived its name from a piece of ground of considerable size termed the Curtain, which anciently belonged to Holywell Priory. The land is mentioned under that name in a lease of 29 Henry VIII., 1538,—"Sibilla Newdigate, priorissa dicti nuper monasterii sancti Johannis Baptiste de Halliwell predicta, et ejusdem loci conventus, per aliam indenturam suam sigillo eorum conventuali sigillatam, datam primo die Januarij dicto anno vicesimo nono predicti nuper patris nostri, unanimi eorum assensu et consensu dimiserint, tradiderint et ad firmam concesserint prefato nuper Comiti Rutland totam illam mansionem sive mesuagium cum gardino adjacente, scituatam, jacentem et existentem infra muros et portas ejusdem nuper monasterii, cum illa longa pergula ducente a dicto mesuagio usque ad capellam; ac duo stabula et unum fenilem supra edificatum, scituata et existentia extra portas ejusdem nuper monasterii prope pasturam dicte nuper Priorisse vocatam *the Curtene*," Rot. Pat. 27 Eliz., Pars 14. The phrase *extra portas* shows that the Curtain ground was on the southern side of Holywell Lane, the entrance to the priory having been on the north of that road. At a later period there were several buildings, including a large one specially mentioned as the Curtain House (Shoreditch Register), erected upon this land, and one or more were known as being situated in the Curtain Garden. In March, 1581, one William Longe sold to Thomas Harberte,—"all that the house, tenemente or lodge commonlie called the Curtayne, and also all that parcell of grounde and close walled and inclosed with a bricke wall on the west and northe

partes, and in parte with a mudde wall at the west side or ende towardes the southe, called also the Curtayne Close, sometyme apperteyning to the late Priorie of Halliwell nowe dissolved, sett, lyeng and being in the parishe of Sainte Leonarde in Shortedytche, alias Shordiche, in the countie of Middlesex, together with all the gardeyns, fishepond, welles and brick-wall to the premisses or any of them belonginge or apperteyning; and also all and singuler other mesuages, tenementes, edifices and buildinges, with all and singuler their appurtenaunces, erected and builded uppon the saide close called the Curtayne, or uppon any parte or parcell thereof, or to the same nere adjoyning, nowe or late in the severall tenures or occupacions of Thomas Wilkinson, Thomas Wilkins, Roberte Medley, Richard Hickes, Henrie Lanman and Roberte Manne, or any of them, or of their or any of their assigne or assignes; and also all other mesuages, landes, tenementes and hereditamentes, with their appurtenaunces, sett, lyeng and being in Halliwell Lane in the saide parishe of Sainte Leonard," Rot. Claus. 23 Eliz. The Curtain House was either in or near Holywell Lane. "John Edwardes, being excommunicated, was buried the vij.th of June in the Kinges high waie in Hallywell Lane neare the Curtayn," Register of St. Leonards, Shoreditch, 1619. In some Chancery papers of the year 1591 it is described as the "howse with the appurtenaunces called the Curtayne," and it is stated that "the grounde there was for the most parte converted firste into garden plottes, and then leasinge the same to divers tenauntes caused them to covenaunt or promise to builde uppon the same, by occasion wherof the buildinges which are there were for the most parte errected and the rentes encreased." That the Curtain estate was on the south of the western end of Holywell Lane is proved decisively by an indenture of 1723, which refers to a plot of five acres then adjoining Sugarloaf Yard on the east, and which is described as "part or parcell of a peice of ground theretofore and then called by the name of the Curtain." The name is still retained in the locality in that of the well-known Curtain Road, which must have been so called either from the theatre or from the land above described.

The earliest notice of the Curtain Theatre by name, which has yet been discovered, occurs in Northbrooke's Treatise on Dicing, licensed in December, 1577; but it is also probably alluded to, with the Theatre, by one Thomas White, in a Sermon Preached at Pawles Crosse on Sunday the Thirde of November, 1577, in which he says,—"looke but uppon the common playes in London, and see the multitude that flocketh to them and followeth them; beholde the *sumptuous theatre houses*, a continuall monument of Londons prodigalitie and folly." The Queen's Players seem to have acted at the Curtain as well as at the neighbouring theatre. At all events, Tarlton, who belonged to that company, played there, if we may confide in an allusion in one of the Jests. If credit may be given to the evidence of Aubrey, Ben Jonson also was at one

time an actor at this theatre. According to that biographer, he "acted and wrote, but both ill, at the Green Curtaine, a kind of nursery or obscure play-house somewhere in the suburbes, I thinke towardes Shoreditch or Clarkenwell." Aubrey is the only authority for the theatre ever having been known as the Green Curtain, one probably of that writer's numerous blunders; but Rare Ben's comedy of Every Man in his Humour was most likely produced there in the year 1598.

Is there decisive evidence that the Lord Chamberlain's Servants were in the habit of acting at the Curtain Theatre about the last-named period? The reply to this question depends upon the interpretation given to the words "Curtaine plaudeties" in the well-known lines on stage-struck Luscus in Marston's Scourge of Villanie, 1598; whether the word *Curtaine* refers to the playhouse, or whether it is merely a synonyme for *theatrical* in reference to the curtains of the stage. The latter explanation appears to be somewhat forced, while the former and more natural one is essentially supported by the facts that Pope, who was then a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Company, was also a sharer in that establishment; and that Armin was playing there early in the year 1600. That the Curtain Theatre was, towards the close of the sixteenth century, one of the homes of the legitimate drama, may be gathered from what Guilpin says in his Skialetheia, 1598,—"or if my dispose=Perswade me to a play, I'le to the Rose,=Or Curtaine, one of Plautus comedies,=Or the patheticke Spaniards tragedies;" in allusion, possibly, to the Comedy of Errors and the Spanish Tragedy. If the supposition that Marston speaks of the Curtain Theatre be correct, and no doubt can be fairly entertained on that point, it is certain that Shakespeare's tragedy of Romeo and Juliet was there "plaid publiquely by the Right Honourable the L. of Hunsdon his Servants," title-page of ed. 1597. Luscus is represented as infatuated with this play, and the allusion to his "courting Lesbia's eyes" out of his theatrical commonplace-book can but refer to Romeo's impassioned rhapsody on the eyes of Juliet. It may then be safely assumed that Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet was acted at the Curtain Theatre some time between July 22nd, 1596, the day on which Lord Hunsdon, then Lord Chamberlain of the Household, died, and April 17th, 1597, when his son, Lord Hunsdon, was appointed to that office (Privy Council Register). During those nine months the Company was known as Lord Hunsdon's, the same body of actors continuing throughout to serve those two noblemen, so that any allusion, if there be one, to the Lord Chamberlain's Servants, bearing date between August 6th, 1596, and March 5th, 1597, would refer to a company under the patronage of Lord Cobham, who was the Lord Chamberlain during that period. That the members of the other Lord Chamberlain's Company transferred their services to Lord Hunsdon on the death of his father in

July, 1596, is shown by the following entry in the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber to Queen Elizabeth,—"to John Hemynge and George Bryan, servauntes to the late Lorde Chamberlayne and now servauntes to the Lorde Hunsdon, upon the Councelles warraunte dated at Whitehall xxj. mo die Decembris, 1596, for five enterludes or playes shewed by them before her Majestie on St. Stephans daye at nighte, the sondaye nighte followeing, Twelfe Nighte, one St. Johns daye and on Shrovesunday at nighte laste, the some of xxxiij.*li.* vj.*s.* viij.*d*, and by waye of her Majesties rewarde, xvj.*li.* xiij.*s.* iiij.*d*, in all the some of l.*li.*," MS. in the Public Record Office.

In the early part of the year 1600 arrangements were made for the erection of the Fortune Theatre near Golden Lane, a spot which was at no considerable distance, not much more than half a mile, from the Curtain Theatre. It was considered by the opponents of theatrical amusements that the permission to establish a new theatre in that part of London should be conditional upon the removal of the older one. Strenuous efforts were accordingly made to induce the Privy Council to insist upon the demolition of the Curtain, and orders were given in June, 1600, to that effect; but, like the previous injunction of 1597, they proved to be altogether inoperative. The Lords of the Council seem indeed to have been aware of the possibility of this result, for, in their letters to the Lord Mayor of London and the Justices of Middlesex, they observe,—"as wee have done our partes in prescribinge the orders, so, unlesse yow perfourme yours in lookinge to the due execution of them, we shall loose our labor, and the wante of redresse must be imputed unto yow and others unto whome it apperteyneth," Privy Council Register, 22 June, 1600. Copies of the Lords' order and their letters will be found in the division respecting the Later Theatres, and it appears from the former that Tylney, the Master of the Revels, had stated to the Council "that the house nowe in hand to be builte by the saide Edward Allen is not intended to encrease the nomber of the playhouses, but to be insteede of another, namely the Curtayne, which is ether to be ruyned and plucked downe or to be put to some other good use." It is not improbable that Allen was anxious for the suppression of the Curtain as a theatre, and was exerting his influence to accomplish that object. The prospects of the new establishment would of course have been improved had the efforts in this direction been successful, but the combined influences of the City authorities and the Privy Council were ineffectual. On the last day of the following year, 1601, the Council made another strenuous but fruitless attempt to persuade the magistrates to enforce their order for the suppression of all but the two selected theatres, the Globe and the Fortune.

The players brought much of this opposition upon themselves by their ridicule of the citizens. Complaints were made, in 1601, that the

actors at the Curtain Theatre had covertly satirized living individuals of good position in some of their plays; but it is not known to which of the companies they belonged. With a view of terminating these irregularities, the Lords of the Privy Council addressed the following letter to "certaine Justices of the Peace in the county of Middlesex" on May 10th, 1601, —"wee do understand that certaine players, that use to recyte their playes at the Curtaine in Moorefeildes, do represent upon the stage in their interludes the persons of some gent. of good desert and quallity that are yet alive under obscure manner, but yet in such sorte as all the hearers may take notice both of the matter and the persons that are meant thereby. This beinge a thinge very unfitte, offensive and contrary to such direccion as have bin heretofore taken, that no plaies should be openly shewed but such as were first perused and allowed, and that might minister no occasion of offence or scandall, wee do hereby require you that you do forthwith forbidd those players, to whomsoever they appertaine, that do play at the Courtaine in Moorefeildes, to represent any such play, and that you will examine them who made that play and to shew the same unto you, and, as you in your discrecions shall thincke the same unfitte to be publiquely shewed, to forbidd them from henceforth to play the same eyther privately or publiquely; and yf, upon veiwe of the said play, you shall finde the subject so odious and inconvenient as is informed, wee require you to take bond of the cheifest of them to aunswere their rashe and indiscreete dealing before us," MS. Register of the Privy Council. Shakespeare's association with the Curtain probably terminated at the opening of the Globe, and certainly did not continue after the decease of Elizabeth. Throughout the reign of James the former theatre was occupied by actors with whom the great dramatist had no professional connexion.

The puritanical writers of the time of Shakespeare were indignant at the erection of regular theatrical establishments, and the Theatre and Curtain were the special objects of their invective. They are continually named together as sinks of all wickedness and abomination. In Northbrooke's Treatise, 1577-8, Youth asks,—"doe you speake against those places also whiche are made uppe and builded for such playes and enterludes, as the Theatre and Curtaine is, and other suche lyke places besides?" Age replies,—"yea, truly, for I am persuaded that Satan hath not a more speedie way and fitter schoole, to work and teach his desire to bring men and women into his snare of concupiscence and filthie lustes of wicked whoredome, than those places and playes and theatres are, and therefore necessarie that those places and players shoulde be forbidden and dissolved and put downe by authoritie, as the brothell houses and stewes are." The effects of the great earthquake of April, 1580, were felt generally throughout London as well as at the theatres, but Stubbes affects to consider it a "fearfull judgement of

God" on the wickedness of the stage,—"the like judgement almost did the Lord shewe unto them a little before, beyng assembled at their theaters to see their baudie enterludes and other trumperies practised, for He caused the yearth mightely to shake and quaver as though all would have fallen downe, wherat the people, sore amazed, some leapt down from the top of the turrets, pinacles, and towers where thei stood to the grounde, whereof some had their legges broke, some their armes, some their backes, some hurt one where, some another, and many sore crusht and brused, but not any but thei went awaie sore afraied and wounded in conscience," Anatomie of Abuses, 1583; the allusion to "turrets, pinacles, and towers" being no doubt a metaphorical flourish. According to Munday—"at the play-houses the people came running foorth, supprised® with great astonishment," View of Sundry Examples, 1580. "The earthquake that hapned in the yeere 1580 on the sixt of April, that shaked not only the scenicall Theatre, but the great stage and theatre of the whole land," Gardnier's Doomes-day Booke, 1606. Two days after the shock was published a ballad entitled,—"Comme from the plaie,=Comme from the playe,=The house will fall, so people saye,=The earth quakes, lett us hast awaye." At the time of this earthquake the only theatres in England were situated in Shoreditch, and there is evidence that the effects of it were felt in that locality. "Also in Shordiche and other places fell chymneys, as at Mr. Alderman Osburns in Fyllpot Lane fell a pece of a chymney," MS. Diary, 6 April, 1580. Again, when Field wrote his Godly Exhortation upon the accident which occurred at Paris Garden in January, 1583, he could not resist the introduction of adverse criticism on the Shoreditch theatres,—"surely it is to be feared, beesides the distruction bothe of bodye and soule that many are brought unto by frequenting the Theater, the Curtin and such like, that one day those places will likewise be cast downe by God himselfe, and being drawen with them a huge heape of such contempners and prophane persons utterly to be killed and spoyled in their bodyes." This is, however, moderate language in comparison with the exaggerated invective of Stubbes in the same year. After alluding to the Theatre and Curtain as "Venus pallaces," he writes, here speaking generally of plays and theatres,—"doe they not maintaine bawdrie, insinuat foolerie and renue the remembraunce of Heathen idolatrie? Doe thei not induce whoredome and uncleannesse? Nay, are thei not rather plaine devourers of maidenly virginitie and chastitie? for proofe whereof but marke the flockyng and runnyng to Theaters and Curtens daylie and hourelie, night and daie, tyme and tide, to see playes and enterludes, where suche wanton gestures, such bawdie speeches, suche laughyng and flearyng, suche kissyng and bussyng, suche clippyng and culling, such wincking and glauncing of wanton eyes and the like is used as is wonderfull to beholde," Anatomie of Abuses, ed. 1583.

Rankins, in his Mirrour of Monsters, 1587, observes that "the Theater and Curtine may aptlie be termed for their abhomination, the chappell adulterinum." It was not surprising that these attacks provoked retaliation, so the absurdities of the Martin Marprelate clique were unmercifully ridiculed at the Theatre, as appears from a marginal note, *The Theater*, to the following passage in Martins Months Minde, 1589, —"as first, drie-beaten and therby his bones broken; then whipt, that made him winse; then wormd and launced, that he tooke verie grievouslie to be made a Maygame upon the stage." It is afterwards stated that "everie stage plaier made a jest of him." Some of these theatrical satires were so virulent that their performance was forbidden. "Would those comedies might be allowed to be plaid that are pend, and then I am sure he would be decyphered and so perhaps discouraged," Pappe with an Hatchet, n. d. The Theatre and Curtain are again named together by Rainolds, in his Overthrow of Stage Playes, 1599, written in 1593, but there merely in reference to male actors being permitted to wear the costume of the other sex.

Although the denunciations of the Puritans were grounded upon exaggerated statements, there can be little doubt that both these theatres were frequented by some disreputable characters. "In the playhouses at London," observes Gosson in his Playes Confuted, sig. G. 6,—"it is the fashion of youthes to go first into the yarde and to carry theire eye through every gallery; then like unto ravens, where they spye the carion thither they flye and presse as nere to the fairest as they can; instead of pomegranates they give them pippines; they dally with their garments to passe the time; they minister talke upon al occasions, and eyther bring them home to theire houses on small acquaintance, or slip into taverns when the plaies are done; he thinketh best of his painted sheath, and taketh himselfe for a jolly fellow, that is noted of most to be busyest with women in all such places." The independent testimony of the author of the Newes from the North, 1579, is to a similar effect,—"I have partely shewed you heere what leave and libertie the common people, namely youth, hath to followe their owne lust and desire in all wantonnes and dissolution of life; for further proofe wherof I call to witnesse the Theaters, Courtaines, heaving houses, rifling boothes, bowling alleyes and such places where the time is so shamefully mispent, namely the Sabaoth dayes, unto the great dishonor of God and the corruption and utter destruction of youth." In Anthony Babington's Complaint, written by R. Williams, the former, who was executed in 1586, is represented as saying,—"to bee a good lawier my mynde woulde not frame,=I addicted was to pleasure and given so to game;=But to the Theatre and Curtayne woulde often resorte,=Where I mett companyons fittinge my disporte," MS. Arundel 418. It appears from Nash's Pierce Penilesse, 1592, and several other authorities, that the neighbouring

village of Shoreditch was distinguished by the number of houses which were inhabited by the frail sisterhood. In Skialetheia, 1598, mention is made of an old citizen, "who, comming from the Curtaine, sneaketh in= To some odde garden noted house of sinne;" and West, in a rare poem, the Court of Conscience, 1607, tells a libertine,—"Towards the Curtaine then you must be gon,—The garden alleyes paled on either side;= Ift be too narrow walking, there you slide." Compare also a line in a poem of the time of James I. in MS. Harl. 2127,—"Friske to the Globe or Curtaine with your trull."

Little is known respecting the dimensions and structure of either the Theatre or the Curtain. In Stockwood's Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse the 24 of August, 1578, they are alluded to as having been erected at a large cost, while the former is termed a gorgeous playing-place,—"what should I speake of beastlye playes againste which out of this place every man crieth out? have we not houses of purpose built with great charges for the maintainance of them, and that without the Liberties, as who woulde say,—there, let them saye what they will say, we wil play. I know not how I might with the godly learned especially more discommende the gorgeous playing place erected in the fieldes than to terme it, as they please to have it called, a Theatre, that is, even after the maner of the olde heathnish theatre at Rome, a shew place of al beastly and filthie matters, to the which it can not be chosen that men should resort without learning thence muche corruption." The Theatre is mentioned in 1601 as "the late greate howse," and that it was correctly so designated would appear from the proceedings of a Chancery Suit, Braynes v. Burbage, 1590, in which it is stated that James Burbage, at the time of its erection, had borrowed the sum of £600 for the express object of defraying the larger portion of the cost. This agrees with an assertion made by Burbage's descendants in 1635, that "the Theater hee built with many hundred poundes taken up at interest." Allen, the freeholder, stated in 1601 his belief that the Theatre was "erected att the costes and charges of one Braynes, and not of James Burbage, to the value of one thousand markes," that is, between £600 and £700, a large sum at the period at which it was built; and when the building was removed in 1599, Allen estimated its value at £700. This Braynes was the father-in-law of James Burbage. The consideration given for the money advanced by this person must have sadly interfered with the profits derived by Burbage from the Theatre, which was doubtlessly a good speculation in itself. Allen, indeed, speaks of a profit of £2,000 having been realized from it. "And further whereas the complainant," observes Allen, referring to Cuthbert Burbage, "supposeth that the said Jeames Burbage his father did to his great chardges erecte the said Theatre, and therby pretendeth that there should be the greater cause in equitie to releive him, the

complainant, for the same, hereunto the defendant saieth that, consideringe the great proffitt and beniffitt which the said Jeames Burbage and the complainant in their severall times have made therof, which, as the defendant hath credibilie hard, doth amounte to the somme of twoe thousand powndes at the least, the defendant taketh it they have been verie sufficientlye recompensed for their chardges which they have bestowed uppon the said Theatre or uppon anie other buildinges there," Answer of Gyles Allen in the suit of Burbage v. Allen, Court of Requests, 42 Eliz. Cuthbert Burbage, in his Replication, denies "that the said James Burbadge or this complaynant hathe made twoo thousand poundes proffitt and benefitt by the said theatre." Nothing is here said respecting the material of which the edifice was constructed, but in another paper in the same suit he alludes to "certayne tymber and *other* stuffe ymploied in makinge and erectinge the Theator." That the building was mainly constructed of wood cannot, however, admit of a doubt, it being spoken of continually in the legal papers of more than one of the Burbage suits as a structure of "wood and timber," materials which James Burbage, being a joiner, would naturally have selected. "The said defendant Cuthbert Burbage being well able to justifie the pullinge downe, usinge and disposinge, of the woodde and tymber of the saide playehowse," Answer of the Burbages, 44 Eliz. The Lord Mayor, in a letter written in April, 1583, speaks, in reference to the Theatre, of "the weakenesse of the place for ruine," alluding perhaps to the wooden scaffolds inside the building.

Although entertainments took place both at the Theatre and at the Curtain during the winter months, there can be but little doubt that the roof in each of these buildings merely covered the stage and galleries, the pit or yard being open to the sky. This was certainly the case in the latter theatre. The author of Vox Graculi or Jack Dawe's Prognostication, 1623, describing the characteristics of the month of April, observes,—"about this time new playes will be in more request then old, and if company come currant to the Bull and Curtaine, there will be more money gathered in one after-noone then will be given to Kingsland Spittle in a whole moneth; also, if, at this time, about the houres of foure and five it waxe cloudy, and then raine downeright, they shall sit dryer in the galleries then those who are the understanding men in the yard." The afternoon was likewise the usual time for the performances in Shakespeare's day. Chettle, in his Kind Hartes Dreame, 1592, alludes to bowling-alleys, situated between the City walls and the Theatre, "that were wont in the after-noones to be left empty, by the recourse of good fellows unto that unprofitable recreation of stage-playing."

The charge for admission to the Theatre was a penny, but this sum merely entitled the visitor to standing room in the lower part of the

house. If he wanted to enter any of the galleries another penny was demanded, and even then a good seat was not always secured without a repetition of the fee. None who go, observes Lambard, "to Paris Gardein, the Bell Savage or Theatre, to beholde beare baiting, enterludes or fence play, can account of any pleasant spectacle unlesse they first pay one pennie at the gate, another at the entrie of the scaffolde, and the thirde for a quiet standing," Perambulation of Kent, ed. 1596, p. 233, one of the passages in that edition not found in ed. 1576. The author of Pappe with an Hatchet, 1589, speaks of twopence as the usual price of admission "at the Theater," so the probability is that the penny alone was insufficient for securing places which would be endured by any but the lowest and poorest class of auditors, those who stood in the yard or pit and were there exposed to the uncertainties of the weather. Those of the audience who were in the galleries were, at least to a considerable extent, protected from the rain. There were upper as well as lower galleries in the building, the former being mentioned in the following interesting clause of the proposed lease to Burbage of 1585,—"and further that yt shall or maye be lawfull for the sayde Gyles and for hys wyfe and familie, upon lawfull request therfore made to the sayde Jeames Burbage, his executors or assignes, to enter or come into the premisses, and their in some one of the upper romes to have such convenient place to sett or stande to se such playes as shal be ther played, freely without anythinge therefore payeinge, soe that the sayde Gyles, hys wyfe and familie, doe come and take ther places before they shal be taken upp by any others." It appears from this extract that there were seats for the audience as well as standing-room in the galleries.

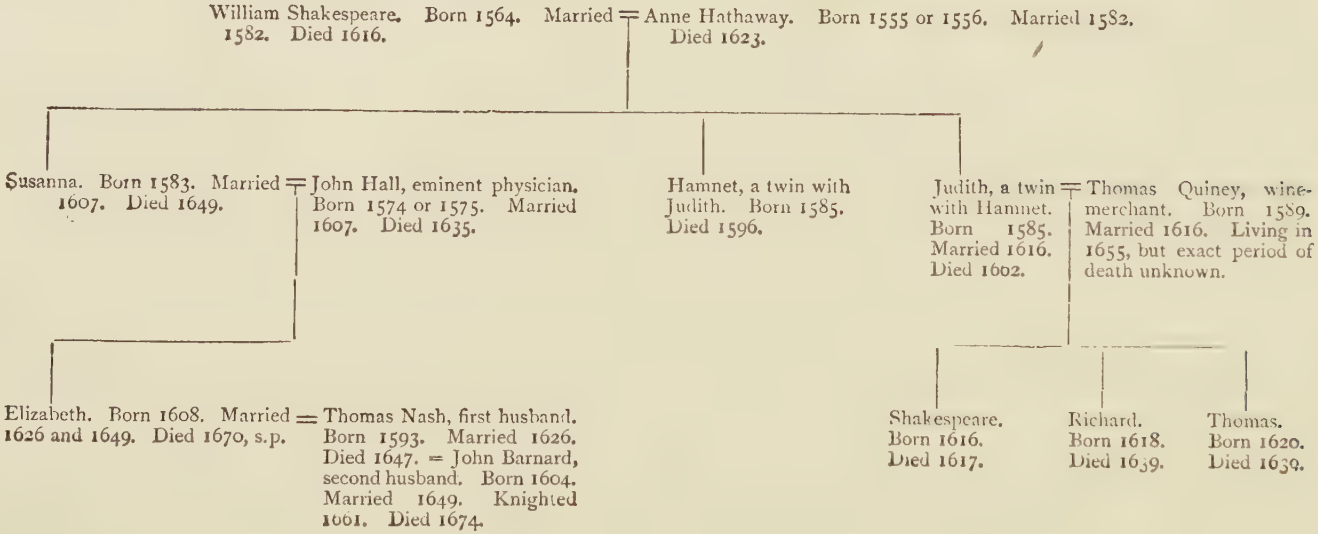
Neither the Theatre nor the Curtain was used exclusively for dramatic entertainments. "Theater and Curtine for comedies and other shewes," marginal note in Stow's Survay of London, ed. 1598, p. 69. Both these theatres were frequently engaged for matches and exercises in the art of fencing, as appears from several notices, dated between the years 1578 and 1585, in MS. Sloane 2530, a curious volume which seems to be a register of a society formed for the advancement of the science of fencing, in which degrees were granted to those who proved themselves to be the most efficient. It would appear from the original manuscript of Stow's Survey that not only fencers, but tumblers and such like, sometimes exhibited at these theatres. Near the buildings of the dissolved Priory, observes Stow, "are builded two howses for the showe of activities, comodies, tragidies and histories for recreation; the one of them is named the Curteyn in Halywell, the othar the Theatre; thes are on the backesyde of Holywell, towards the filde," MS. Harl. 538. It should, however, be observed that the word *activities* is not in the printed editions of 1598 or 1599, and the passage is omitted altogether in the subsequent impressions.

When the fencers engaged the Theatre they sometimes increased their audience by marching "with pomp" through the City. In July, 1582, the Lord Mayor thus writes to the Earl of Warwick respecting one John David, a fencer in the Earl's service, who desired to exhibit his skill at that establishment,—"I have herein yet further done for your servante what I may, that is, that if he may obteine lawefully to playe at the Theater or other open place out of the Citie, he hath and shall have my permition with his companie drumes and shewe to passe openly throughe the Citie, being not upon the sondaye, which is as muche as I maye justefie in this season, and for that cause I have with his owne consent apointed him Monday next," City of London MSS. This permission, as appears from the correspondence, was granted very reluctantly by the Lord Mayor, whose successor in the following year absolutely prohibited any display of the kind. His Lordship thus writes on April 27th, 1583, to one of the Justices of the Peace,—"there ar certain fencers that have set up billes, and meane to play a prise at the Theatre on Tuesday next, which is May eve. How manie waies the same maie be inconvenient and dangerous, specially in that they desire to passe with pomp thorough the Citie, yow can consider; namelie, the statute against men of that facultie, the perill of infection, the danger of disorders at such assemblies, the memorie of Ill May Daie begon upon a lesse occasion of like sort, the weakenesse of the place for ruine, wherof we had a late lamentable example at Paris Garden; for these causes in good discretion we have not only not geven them licence, but also declared to them the dangers, willing them at their perill to forbeare their passing both thorough the Citie and their whole plaieng of such prise."

It would appear, from these notices of the fencing matches which took place at the Theatre and Curtain, that both establishments were accessible to persons who desired to hire them for occasional purposes. The probability is that they were thus engaged by various companies, and a curious narrative, given in the following words in a letter from Fleetwood to Lord Burghley, written in June, 1584, seems to confirm this opinion,—"upon Sonndaie my Lord sent ij. aldermen to the Cowrt for the suppressing and pulling downe of the Theatre and Curten, for all the Lords agreed thereunto, saving my Lord Chamberlen and Mr. Vice-Ch., but we obteyned a lettre to suppresse theym all;—upon the same night I sent for the Quenes players and my Lord of Arundel his players, and they all well nighe obeyed the Lordes lettres;—the chiefest of her Highnes players advised me to send for the owner of the Theater, who was a stubburne fellow, and to bynd him;—I dyd so;—he sent me word that he was my Lord of Hunsdens man and that he wold not comme at me, but he wold in the mornyng ride to my Lord;—then I sent the under-shereff for hym, and he browght hym to me, and, at his commyng,

he showtted me owt very justice; and in the end I shewed hym my Lord his masters hand, and then he was more quiet; but, to die for it, he wold not be bound.—And then I mynding to send hym to prison, he made sute that he might be bounde to appere at the oier and determiner, the which is to-morowe, where he said that he was suer the court wold not bynd hym, being a counselers man; and so I have graunted his request, where he shal be sure to be bounde, or els ys lyke to do worse," M.S. Lansd.41, art. 13. It is not to be assumed that the person who is here mentioned as "the owner of the Theater" was either Burbage or Hyde. He was more probably a temporary occupier of the building, for James Burbage is not known to have ever belonged to the company of actors in the pay of Lord Hunsdon, who was at that time Lord Chamberlain of the Household. It may reasonably be gathered from Fleetwood's letter that at least three companies, those of Queen Elizabeth, Lord Arundel and Lord Hunsdon, were playing in June, 1584, at the Theatre or Curtain; the first and last probably at the Theatre, perhaps acting on alternate days. It is certain that the Queen's Company sometimes performed at the latter, for Laneham and Tarlton, both at one period belonging to that company, are noticed as having acted there; the author of Martins Months Minde, 1589, speaking of "twittle twattles that I had learned in ale-houses and at the Theater of Lanam and his fellowes." Tarlton is alluded to, as an actor at the same establishment, in Nash's Pierce Penilesse, 1592,—"Tarlton at the Theator made jests of him;" and again in Harington's Metamorphosis of Ajax, 1596,—"which worde was after admitted into the Theater with great applause by the mouth of Mayster Tarlton, the excellent comedian." The establishment appears to have been noted for its comic entertainments. "If thy vaine," observes the author of Pappe with an Hatchet, 1589, "bee so pleasaunt and thy witt so so® nimble that all consists in glicks and girds, pen some play for the Theater."

THE LINEAGE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE UNTIL ITS EXTINCTION IN THE YEAR 1670.

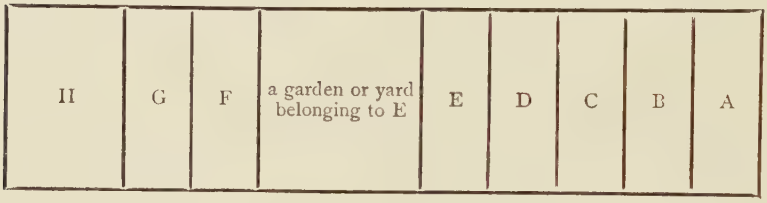

William Shakespeare. Born 1564. Married 1582. Died 1616.
Anne Hathaway. Born 1555 or 1556. Married 1582. Died 1623.
Susanna. Born 1583. Married 1607. Died 1649.
John Hall, eminent physician. Born 1574 or 1575. Married 1607. Died 1635.
Hamnet, a twin with Judith. Born 1585. Died 1596.
Judith, a twin with Hamnet. Born 1585. Married 1616. Died 1602.
Thomas Quiney, wine-merchant. Born 1589. Married 1616. Living in 1655, but exact period of death unknown.
Elizabeth. Born 1608. Married 1626 and 1649. Died 1670, s.p.
Thomas Nash, first husband. Born 1593. Married 1626. Died 1647. = John Barnard, second husband. Born 1604. Married 1649. Knighted 1661. Died 1674.
Shakespeare. Born 1616. Died 1617.
Richard. Born 1618. Died 1639.
Thomas. Born 1620. Died 1639.

NOTES ON THE BIRTH-PLACE.

Upon the north side of Henley Street is a detached building, consisting of two houses annexed to each other, the one on the west having been known from time immemorial as Shakespeare's Birth-Place, and that on the east a somewhat larger one which was purchased by his father in the year 1556. It may fairly be assumed that in the latter the then "considerable dealer in wool" deposited no trifling portion of his stock. As it will be convenient, in the following brief notices, to be able to refer to the houses under names that might have been applicable to them in the sixteenth century, the first will be termed the Birth-Place and the other the Wool-Shop.

1. *The Purchase of the Wool-Shop.*—Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, who had been for a considerable period the Lord of the Manor of Stratford, died in 1589, and, leaving no issue, it reverted to the Crown. In an inquisition on his estates taken in the October of the next year, 1590, is a list of the manorial tenants in Henley Street, eight of whom are mentioned in the following order:—A. Ballivus et burgenses ville de Stratford tenent libere unum tenementum cum pertinenciis per redditum per annum, iij.*d.*, secta curie.—B. Ricardus Hornebie tenet libere unum tenementum cum pertinenciis per redditum per annum v.*d.*, secta curie.—C. Johannes Wylles tenet libere duo tenementa cum pertinenciis per redditum per annum viij.*d.*, secta curie.—D. Johannes Shackespere tenet libere unum tenementum cum pertinenciis per redditum per annum vj.*d.*, secta curie.—E. Idem Johannes tenet libere unum tenementum cum pertinenciis per redditum per annum xiij.*d.*, secta curie.—F. Georgius Badger tenet libere unum tenementum cum pertinenciis per redditum per annum x.*d.*, secta curie.—G. Johannes Ichivar tenet libere unum tenementum cum pertinenciis per redditum per annum xij.*d.*, secta curie.—H. Ballivus et burgenses ville de Stretford tenent libere unum tenementum cum pertinenciis per redditum per annum iij.*d.*, secta curie. There is substantial reason for believing that these entries followed the consecutive arrangement of the situations of the estates from east to west, there being no evidence conflicting with this opinion and its accuracy being established in all but one instance. Assuming this to be the case,—and hardly the vestige of a doubt can be fairly entertained on the subject,—it will be clear from the subsequent analysis that the D freehold of John Shakespeare was the Wool-

Shop, while the identity of the chief-rent proves that it was the same house which was purchased by him in 1556,—"item, quod Edwardus West alienavit predicto Johanni Shakespere unum tenementum cum gardino adjacente in Henley Stret per redditum inde domino per annum vj.*d.* et sectam curie, et idem Johannes, presens in curia, fecit fidelitatem," visus Franci Plegii, 2 October, 3 et 4 Phil. et Mar. It has been generally assumed that this purchase was one of a copyhold, the oversight having arisen from its being taken for granted that all entries in court-rolls referred to that description of title, but it was the usual practice to note in those records all transfers of freehold estates that were subject to chief-rents. The relative position of the house then conveyed to John Shakespeare will be observed in the annexed diagram,

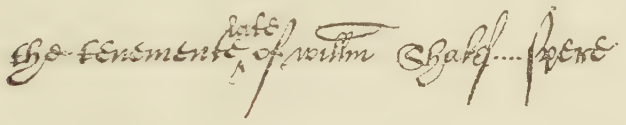


Henley Street.

but no endeavour has been made to represent even an approximation to the true measures. It will, however, be of assistance in considering the following notes on the several properties as they existed in 1590.

A. Then, as now, Corporation property. A glover of the name of Bradley was the lessee of this house in the opening years of Shakespeare's life, and a person named Wilson, who followed the correlative business of a whittawer, is mentioned as its tenant in 1577. Having been partially destroyed by fire in or about the year 1594, it was shortly afterwards rebuilt by the latter, who was succeeded in the tenancy, in the early part of the reign of James I., by Thomas Greene of Bishopton. —B. This house is mentioned in an indenture of 1573 as then the tenement of one Richard Hornebee, in whose possession it remained until at least 1603, and members of the family continued in it, either as freeholders or occupiers, for many years afterwards. It was purchased by Thomas Nash, the first husband of Shakespeare's grand-daughter, in the year 1620, and it is described in his will, 1642, as "one messuage or tenement, with the appurtenances, now in the tenure of one John Horneby, blacksmith."—C. There were originally two small houses on this plot which belonged in 1575 to William Wedgewood, and were

purchased from him in that year by Edward Willis, being then described as, "all those his towe tenementes or burgages lying together and beinge in Stretford aforesaid, in a street there commonly called Henley Streete, which now ar in the use occupatyon and possessyon of the sayd William Wedgewood, betwyne the tenement of Richard Hornebe of the east part, and the tenement of John Shakesper, yeoman, of the west parte, and the streete aforesaid of the sowthe parte, and the Quenes highway called the Gillpittes of the north parte." These cottages had been converted into one house some time previously to July, 1609, when the latter is noticed as, "all that messuage or tenemente and burgage with appurtenances called the Bell, otherwise the signe of the Bell, heretofore used or occupyed in two tenementes, scituate and beinge in Stratforde-upon-Avon in the countye of Warwicke, in a streete there comonlie called Henley Streete, and nowe or late in the tenure or occupation of Roberte Brookes, or of his assignes or undertenauntes, betwene the tenemente of Thomas Hornebie on the easte parte, and the tenemente *late* of William Shakespere on the weaste parte, and the streete aforesaid on the southe parte, and the Kinges heighe waye called the Gillpittes on the northe parte,"



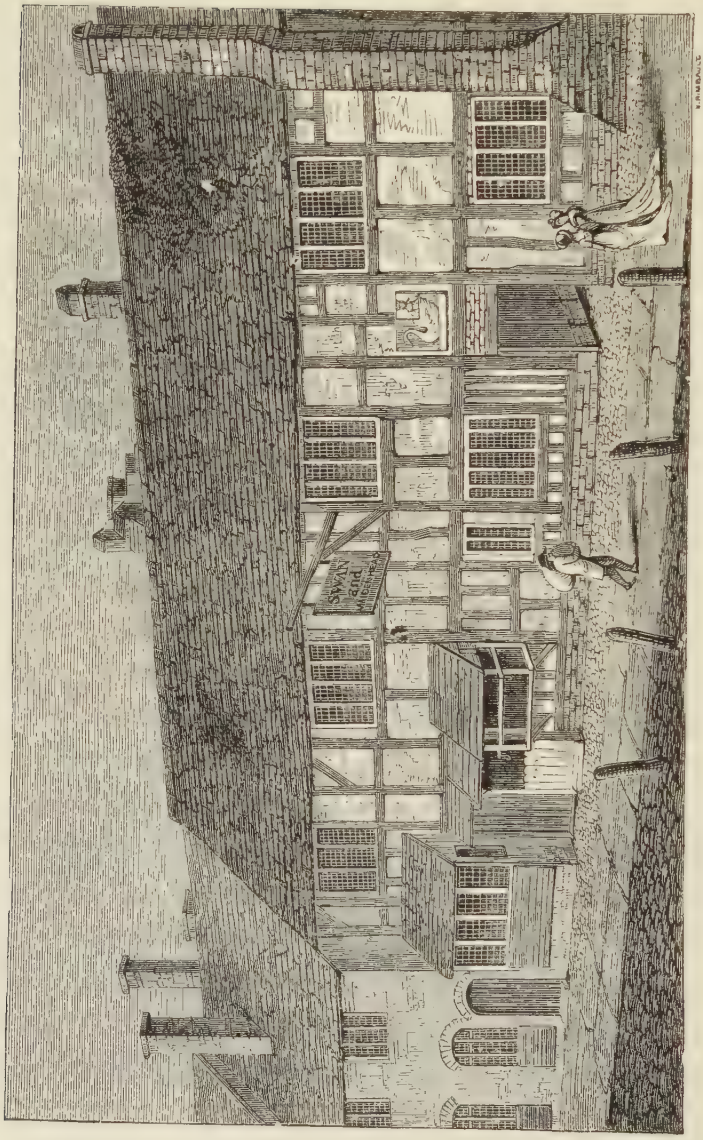
the word *late* being an interpolation in the original document. A similar description, found in a later indenture, 1613, runs as follows,—"all that messuage or tenemente and burgage with appurtenaunces called the Belle, otherwise the signe of the Belle, heretofore used or occupyed in two tenementes; scituate and beinge in Stratforde-upon-Avon in the countye of Warwicke, in a streete there comonlie called Henley streete, and nowe or late in the tenure or occupation of Roberte Brookes or of his assignes or undertenantes, betwene the tenemente of Thomas Hornebye on the easte parte, and a tenemente late William Shakespere on the weaste parte, and the streete aforesaid on the southe parte, and the kinges heighewaye called the Gilpittes on the northe parte." This Robert Brookes is mentioned as a licensed innholder in January, 1603, and as residing in Henley Street in that capacity in 1606. The Bell was purchased by Thomas Nash in 1647, when it was described as, "all that messuage or tenement and burgage with thappurtenaunces called the Bell, or the signe of the Bell, heretofore used or occupied in two tenementes, scituate lying and being in Stratford aforesaid in the said county of Warwick, in a street there called the Henly

Street, now in the tenure or occupacion of the said Henry Willis or of his assignes, or undertenants, between the tenement of Mr. Nash on the east parte, and the tenement in the tenure of John Rutter on the west parte, and the street on the south parte, and the Kings high-way called the Gilpitts on the north parte." None of the drawings which show the western end of this house as it appeared in the last century, and no earlier ones are known, are quite reliable, but it may be gathered from them that the Bell adjoined the Wool-Shop, that its roof was somewhat higher than that of the latter, and that there was a little projection of the frontage into the street beyond the line of that of the buildings on the west.—D. The Wool-Shop.—E. The Birth-Place.—F. On August the 14th, 1591, George Badger, draper, the then owner of this house, made a settlement in which it is described as "totum illud messuagium sive tenementum meum, cum pertinenciis, scituatum, jacens et existens, in Stretford predicta, in quodam vico ibidem vocato Henley Streete, inter tenementum Roberti Johnsons ex una parte et tenementum Johannis Shakespere ex altera parte." The property is also mentioned in John Shakespeare's conveyance of 1597 as the freehold of George Badger, and it continued in the hands of the latter or his representatives until 1631, when it was sold to one Thomas Horne. At some uncertain period before 1707 (manor rent-book) the house had been converted into an inn named the Swan, one which was merged, sign and all, into the adjoining White Lion about the year 1753.—G. This property is mentioned in October, 1590, as the freehold of John Ichivar, but in or before August, 1591, it appears to have passed into the hands of one Robert Johnsons. It continued to be owned by the latter or by his descendants until February, 1684–5, when it was sold to Edward Elderton. It was then an inn "called or knowne by the name or signe of the White Lyon" in the occupation of the last-named individual, and had been one under the same title for a considerable period. "William Mayo, the tapster at the Whyt Lione," Bur. Reg., 1667. It may be worth adding that there was a Robert Johnson, described as an innholder, who took a lease of some ground in Henley Street from the Corporation in 1598.—H. Then, as now, Corporation property.

2. *The Occupants of the Wool-Shop.*—Although there is no direct evidence on the subject, there can hardly be a reasonable doubt that these premises were at one time in the occupation of John Shakespeare. The facts of there having formerly been interior door-ways between the Birth-Place and the Wool-shop, and that those communications must have been formed before 1616, after which year the two houses were always occupied as separate tenements, render it all but certain that they were united, in part at least of his time, as one residence and place of business. If this had not been the case, one of them would, in all probability, have fallen into other hands during the pressure of his financial

embarrassments. After his death in 1601 the Wool-Shop descended to the poet as heir-at-law, but nothing has been discovered respecting his treatment of it, beyond the inference to be drawn from the language of his will, that no member of his family was resident there in January, 1616. It is hardly likely that his mother would have required both the houses during her widowhood, and, so far as the evidences at present accessible enable an opinion to be formed, it would appear most probable that he let the Wool-Shop, in or about the year 1602, to an incidental tenant; or it may be that the latter course was not taken until after the death of his mother in 1608, when he most likely permitted his sister Joan to live rent-free at the Birth-Place. Either theory would be consistent with the notice of the Wool-Shop in 1609 as "the tenemente late of William Shakespere." The repetition of this statement in 1613 (see the annexed fac-simile) is of no import,

the lawyers of the olden time frequently adopting descriptions of parcels from anterior indentures, and that this is most likely the case in the present instance appears from the fact of the house being noted as "the tenement late William Shakspere" in a later Bell estate deed of 1639. The next allusion to the Wool-Shop is in the Hall and Nash settlement of the year last-mentioned, in which it is entered as being "nowe or late in the occupacion of Jane Hiccox, widdowe." It by no means follows from this description that the house was not then an inn, and that it was one, if any such, on a respectable scale may fairly be gathered from a claim made against the Parliament in January, 1645-6, by the children of Mrs. Hiccox, who was then deceased, for "17 silver spoones; 2 silver boles, a bigger and a lesser; a double silver salt; in old money 3*li.* 7*s.*, and divers other things in a trunke, to the value of 20 *li.*" At this time and some years previously one John Rutter was the landlord. "Paid John Rutter of the Maydenheade for the entertaining of Colonel Fines and two pottels wine, as by his bill, 00. 14. 00," Chamb. Acc., 1642. The subsequent history of the tenancy is devoid of interest, but it is worth adding, before dismissing the subject, that the widow Jane was most likely connected by marriage with Lewis Hiccox, one of Shakespeare's land-tenants, who is mentioned as having received a licence for an inn in Henley Street in January, 1603, and whose wife Alice behaved so roughly in the same year to Mrs. Robert Brookes that she was bound over to



THE BIRTH-PLACE OF SHAKESPEARE AS IT APPEARED IN THE YEAR 1806.

keep the peace towards the latter in a recognizance to the amount of £10. All this may justify a conjecture that Robert Brookes and Lewis Hiccox were the then respective tenants of the Bell and the Maidenhead, in which case the two ladies would no doubt have had splendid facilities for a quarrel.

3. The Sign of the Wool-Shop.—The names of houses at Stratford were so frequently altered at the discretions of the occupiers, it is often exceedingly difficult to identify a tenement without a better evidence than its title. So far as is known, the Wool-Shop is noticed as the Maidenhead for the first time in 1642, but it cannot be safely inferred, from the absence of that name in the settlement of 1639, that the sign was not adopted until after the latter year. There was a house so called (Misc. Doc. iii. 177) which Richard Wilkins was arranging to take from John Rogers in April, 1597, one extremely unlikely to have been the Wool-Shop; but amongst the leading inns of Stratford in 1612 were the White Lion, the Bell and the Maidenhead, and it is just possible that all of these may have been situated in Henley Street. The sign which is represented in the earliest drawing of the Wool-Shop, attached to one of the outer timbers of the house, was most likely first placed there in or soon after 1676, in the April of which year it was "ordered that all signe-postes which stand upon the ground in any street within this burrough shall bee taken downe before Midsomer next, and that the signe-boardes shall bee hanged upon postes fixed to the howses." The Wool-Shop is alluded to as the Swan and Maidenhead in the will of Thomas Hart, 1786, a name it retained until its absorption into the present trust, but in all the known documents connected with the estate from 1647 to 1771 it is mentioned under the second title only.

4. The Houses that were purchased in 1575.—John Shakespeare bought two houses at Stratford in this year, but it is not known in what part of the town they were situated, nor whether they were or were not contiguous to each other. They may even have been located in different streets. All that is certain in the matter is that neither on any supposition could have been the Wool-Shop, but it is possible that one of them was the Birth-Place, and that the other was a tenement which then existed between that domicile and Badger's estate on the west. The strip of ground which belonged to the poet's father in 1597 and adjoined the latter was then described as a toft, and when its extremely narrow width is considered, that term could only have been applied to a fragment of land on which the western end of some building had previously stood. The fine that was levied on the occasion of the purchase of the two houses in 1575 is recorded in these words,—"inter Johannem Shakespere, querentem, et Edmundum Hall et Emmam uxorem ejus, deforciantes, de duobus mesuagiis, duobus gardinis et duobus pomariis,

cum pertinenciis, in Stretforde-super-Avon; unde placitum convencionis summonitum fuit inter eos in eadem curia, scilicet, quod predicti Edmundus et Emma recognoverunt predicta tenementa, cum pertinenciis, esse jus ipsius Johannis ut illa que idem Johannes habet de dono predictorum Edmundi et Emme, et illa remiserunt et quietumclamaverunt de ipsis Edmundo et Emma, et heredibus suis, predicto Johanni, et heredibus suis, imperpetuum; et preterea iidem Edmundus et Emma concesserunt pro se, et heredibus ipsius Emme, quod ipsi warantizabunt predicto Johanni, et heredibus suis, predicta tenementa, cum pertinenciis, contra predictos Edmundum et Emmam, et heredes ipsius Emme, imperpetuum; et pro hac recognicione, remissione, quietaclamancia, warantia, fine et concordia, idem Johannes dedit predictis Edmundo et Emme quadraginta libras sterlingorum," Term. Mich. 17 Eliz. It should be mentioned that the practice of exaggerating the number of houses in the descriptions given in fines was certainly too unusual in the sixteenth century, if then a practice at all, to warrant the opinion that one tenement only passed on this occasion. Such exaggerations appear to have been restricted to measurements of land, and even in regard to the latter, notwithstanding Popham's assertion (Reports, ed. 1656, p. 105) that the extensions were invariable, we have evidences to the contrary in the fines levied on the Shakespeare-Combe land in 1610, 1639 and 1647, the descriptions in which agree with those that are found in the indenture of conveyance and in other documents. Then, again, the Birth-Place and Wool-Shop are mentioned, with the addition of New Place, as three messuages in the fines and recoveries of 1639 and 1647, and in the fine levied on the occasion of a mortgage effected by Shakespeare Hart in 1730, the two former houses and the adjoining cottages are accurately described. The last-named fine runs "inter Samuelem Smith, querentem, et Shaxpeer Hart et Annam uxorem ejus, deforciantes, de duobus mesuagiis, quatuor cotagiis, uno horreo, uno stabulo, uno gardino et una acra terre, cum pertinentiis, in Stratford-super-Avon."

5. The Identification of the Birth-Place.—The true solution of a biographical question is most likely to be found in a natural hypothesis which completely reconciles the traditional and positive evidences. It is known that John Shakespeare became the owner of the Birth-Place at some unascertained period before 1590, and if we assume that he resided there from the time of his arrival at Stratford, either occupying the Wool-Shop as well or annexing the latter in 1556, all known difficulties of every kind immediately vanish. This theory, moreover, harmonizes with all the probabilities of the case. He is first introduced to us as one of the residents of Henley Street in 1552, being subjected to the then considerable fine of twelve-pence for an infringement of the by-laws, an amount that would certainly not have been imposed on one

who was not a householder of some position. Then in January, 1597, we have his own authority for the fact that the land on the west of the Birth-Place was at that time in his own occupation,—et modo est in tenura sive occupacione mei, predicti Johannis Shakespere,—a passage which certainly, by implication, refers also to the house. This is the only evidence of the kind that has come down to us, but it is hardly possible to exaggerate its importance in deciding the question now under consideration, the value of a tradition being immeasurably enhanced by its agreement with a record that could not have been known to any of its narrators. Another testimony in the same direction may be fairly accepted in the circumstance of Joan Hart being mentioned in the poet's will, 1616, as then residing at the Birth-Place, this being extremely improbable if it had not been the home of her parents.

6. The local Tradition of the western House being the Birth-Place.—The extent of the confidence to be prudently bestowed upon the above inferences will materially depend on the nature of the evidence that can be given of the immemoriality of this tradition. That evidence is on the whole of a satisfactory character, and at all events it effectually disposes of the attempts, some of them dishonest ones, which have been made, at various intervals from the latter part of the eighteenth century, to circulate the unfounded opinion that the original local tradition indicated neither of the houses on the present Henley Street estate. The two buildings are, however, collectively mentioned as the "house where Shakespeare was born" in Winter's plan of the town, 1759, the attribution being therein casually noted amongst other well-known established facts; and in Greene's view, which was engraved in 1769, they are described together as a "house in Stratford-upon-Avon in which the famous poet Shakespear was born." This view was published in anticipation of Garrick's Jubilee, and identifies the building with the one named in the accounts of that celebration, but up to this period no intimation is anywhere given as to which of the then two houses was considered to be the Birth-Place. The latter deficiency is fortunately supplied by Boswell, who was present at the Jubilee, and informs us that, amongst the embellishments displayed on that occasion, "was a piece of painting hung before the windows of the room where Shakespeare was born, representing the sun breaking through the clouds," London Magazine, September, 1769, p. 453. It is true that the locality of the room is not particularized, but it would be the merest foppery of scepticism to doubt that it is the apartment which is now exhibited as the birth-room; and, indeed, the testimony of my late friend, R. B. Wheler, whose father was at the Jubilee, and who had perfect knowledge of the local reports of that commemoration, should in itself exclude a misgiving on the subject. "The stranger is shewn a room over the butcher's shop, in which our bard is said to have been born; and the

numberless visitors, who have literally covered the walls of this chamber with names and other memorials, sufficiently evince the increasing resort to this hallowed roof," Wheler's Guide to Stratford-upon-Avon, 1814, p. 12. There can, therefore, be no doubt that from the earliest period at which we have, or were likely to have, a record of the fact, it was the tradition of Stratford that the Birth-Place is correctly so designated.

7. *The commercial Aspect.*—The poet's sister, followed by her lineal descendants, occupied the Birth-Place from the time of his death until nearly the end of the eighteenth century. Those descendants must, therefore, have traditionally heard whether or no the family had been resident there at the time of his birth, while, if they believed that this had been the case, the attribution of the birth-room would have been almost within the compass of their own knowledge. It was not merely that it was the best sleeping-apartment in the house, and the only one of the kind that possessed the desirable fire-place, but throughout the English rural districts in those times, as in many even up to the present day, there was a special and accepted room devoted generation after generation to child-bearing. But, at the periods at which the Birth-Place and the birth-room traditions are first recorded, the Harts had become impoverished through the creation of mortgages on their little estate, and it might be plausibly suggested that they may have had pecuniary reasons for originating deceptions in these matters. This was assuredly not the case, but as the point is one of considerable importance in the general enquiry, it will be advisable to examine it somewhat in detail.—There is no doubt that Stratford-on-Avon was considered, from very early Shakespearean times, to have derived its celebrity from its having been the birth-town of the great dramatist. "One travelling through Stratford-upon-Avon, a towne most remarkeable for the birth of famous William Shakespeare," a Banquet of Jests or Change of Cheare, 1639. "William Shakespear, the glory of the English stage, whose nativity at Stratford-upon-Avon is the highest honour that town can boast of," Theatrum Poetarum, 1675. "I say not this to derogate from those excellent persons, but to perswade them, as Homer and our Shakespear did, to immortalize the places where they were born," ded. to Virtue Betrayed, 1682. Throughout the seventeenth century, however, the grave-stone and effigy appear to have been the only memorials of the poet that were indicated to visitors, and no evidence has been discovered which represents either the Birth-Place or the birth-room as an object of commercial exhibition until after the traditions respecting them are known to have been current. There is not a word about the two latter in Richardson's popular edition of De Foe's Tour, 1769, nor in any of the earlier guide-books or itineraries, although several of those works notice other matters of Shakespearean interest. There is, indeed, little doubt that the Birth-Place did not become one

of the incentives for pilgrimage until public attention had been specially directed to it at the time of the Jubilee, while it was not then generally known that the birth-room could be identified. A correspondent of the Gentleman's Magazine, writing from Lichfield in July, 1769, observes,—"I do not know whether the apartment where the incomparable Shakespeare first drew his breath can at this day be ascertained or not, but the house of his nativity, according to undoubted tradition, is now remaining." It was not until long after this period that the former received its due measure of veneration. Ireland, who devoted several pages in 1795 to an account of the two houses, does not even mention the birth-room, and the earliest published view of its interior belongs to the comparatively recent date of 1824. It should also be recollected that English travel in the last century was exceptional, and that, under the most favourable circumstances, no sum that could have been received from the then exceedingly limited number of tourists would have induced either the perpetration of a fraud or its reception by the inhabitants of the town. There is, moreover, ample evidence that the Harts, during the course of their occupancy of the Birth-Place that terminated in 1794, never considered that the amount of the pilgrim-fees was of a definite commercial value. There is no allusion whatever to the subject in the long correspondence respecting the attempted sale of the property which they maintained with their legal adviser between the years 1800 and 1806, and although the latter mentioned the Birth-Place as such in a newspaper advertisement, there is no reference to the Shakespearean associations in the printed hand-bill which announced a projected auction of the two houses in 1805.

8. The proprietary Descent of the Henley Street Estate.—The descent of the Birth-Place and Wool-Shop estates, from the time of their settlement in the poet's will until now, may thus be briefly chronicled. Small portions of the former, as will be presently noticed, were alienated in the last century, but this circumstance does not affect the general history of the devolutions. For upwards of thirty years after the operative commencement of the entail the Birth-Place belonged to his sister Joan, and the Wool-Shop to his elder daughter Susanna; but upon the death of the former, in the autumn of 1646, both became the property of Mrs. Hall, who retained them until her decease in July, 1649. The ownership then passed into the hands of her daughter, Mrs. Barnard, who, having no family, was enabled to devise them by will, in 1670, to Thomas Hart, Joan's grandson, and his issue, with a similar remainder to his brother George. Thomas dying without leaving children, the estates fell to the disposal of George, who, by a deed-poll of April, 1694, gave his eldest son, Shakespeare Hart, immediate possession of the Birth-Place and also the reversion in fee of the Wool-Shop after the expiration of life-interests that were reserved

to his wife and himself. It should, however, be mentioned that a barn and three cottages belonging to the former estate were excepted from the first gift and added to the reversion. Upon the termination of the life interests in 1702, Shakespeare Hart became the owner of both properties, and he continued to hold them until his death in July, 1747. The estates, during his tenure, were subjected to mortgages that ultimately impoverished his successors, but it is unnecessary, in this analysis, to enter into particulars respecting these and subsequent encumbrances or minor dispositions that merely complicated without affecting the real history of the title. Shakespeare Hart (February, 1744-5) had devised the properties to his wife Anne, at whose death, in 1753, they devolved, under the terms of her will, to her husband's nephew, George Hart, who died in 1778 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Thomas. This last-named individual, whose decease occurred in 1793, bequeathed the Wool-Shop to his son John and the Birth-Place to his son Thomas, the latter conveying to his brother three years afterwards (May the 11th, 1796) the realty that he inherited under his father's will, John thus becoming the owner of both estates. He died in 1800, having devised them to his widow for life, with remainder to his three children as tenants-in-common, and by these persons they were sold to one Thomas Court in July, 1806, in which month the connexion of the poet's family with his native town virtually terminated. Court died in 1818, leaving a will in which he directed the properties to be sold after the death of his wife, and the moneys arising therefrom to be divided amongst his children. The widow dying in 1846, they were submitted to auction in London in the following year, and were then acquired by two committees of gentlemen, the representatives of a large body of independent subscribers who had come forward to endeavour to save the Birth-Place from whispered designs of an unpatriotic character. The purchase was completed in 1848 to four delegates selected from the committees, and in July, 1866, those nominal owners surrendered the legal estate, under a public trust, into the hands of the Corporation of Stratford.

9. *The Grounds and Out-buildings.*—Until a recent period there were two wells in the grounds, one of them in the Birth-Place garden and the other in the rear of the Wool-Shop, and as the positions of such accessories were very rarely altered, it may be presumed that the former at all events was in existence at the time of the poet's birth. With this ostensible exception, and beyond the facts of the Wool-Shop being described in 1556 as having a garden, and the Birth-Place in 1597 as attached to land some of which was unbuilt upon, no particulars of any kind have been discovered respecting the contemporary external supplements of the two houses. That there were pigsties, one or two wooden atrocities of a like redolent description, as well as the inevitable

dunghills, may be taken for granted, and it is also nearly certain that there were several hovels and at least one of the numerous barns which were then to be seen in nearly every piece of uninhabited ground in the town. The estates are described in the settlement of 1639 as, "all those two messuages or tenements with thappurtenaunces scituate and being in Stratford-upon-Avon aforesaid, in a certaine streete there called Henley streete, and nowe or late in the severall occupacions of Jane Hiccox and Johan Hart, widdowes; and all and singular howses, edifices, buildings, chambers, cellars, sollers, lights, easements, barnes, stables, backsides, orchards, gardens, profitts and commodities whatsoever, to the said severall messuages or tenements or any of them belonging or in any wise apperteyning, or accepted, reputed, esteemed or taken as part, parcell, or member of the same, or of any of them;" but the latter enumeration is merely taken from the ordinary conveyancing formula, and this is repeated in another description of the property in the settlement of 1647,—"and all that messuage or tenement with thappurtenaunces scituate and beinge in Stratford-upon-Avon aforesaid, in a certen streete there called Henley Streete, commonly called or knowne by the name of the Maidenhead, and now or late in the tenure of John Rutter or his assignes; and all that other messuage or tenement scituate and beinge in Henley Streete aforesaid, now or late in the tenure of Thomas Hart, and adjoyninge unto the said messuage or tenement called the Maidenhead, and all and singuler houses, edifices, buildings, chambers, cellers, sollers, lights, easements, barnes, stables, backsides, orchardes, gardens, profits and commodities whatsoever to the said severall messuages or tenements or any of them belonginge or in any wise apperteyninge, or accepted, reputed, esteemed or taken as parte, parcell or member of the same, or of any of them." The earliest reliable notice, however, of there having been a barn on either of the premises is that given in 1670 in the will of Lady Barnard, who speaks of one on the Birth-Place land as "now or late in the occupacion of Michaell Johnson or his assignes," the tenant here mentioned being then the owner of the next house but one on the west. At this period there was clearly only one barn on the Birth-Place estate, but in 1694 there were two, although which of them, if either, was there in the poet's time it is of course impossible to say. One of them is described by George Hart in the year last-named as "belonging" to the Birth-Place, and the other as "all that one barne standing on the backsid neere to the signe of the White Lyon, now in the occupacion of Edward Elderton, gent." The latter was no doubt the one which is mentioned in 1730 as "all that barn situate on the backside of the said tenements (the western cottages) in a place called the Guild Pitts, and adjoining to the back-gates belonging to the Swan Inn," an account which shows that it was in the extreme north-west corner, the Swan

being the next house on the west. This barn was taken down some time previously to March, 1771, when its site was acquired by John Payton, the owner and landlord of the White Lion. Payton had also bought from Shakespeare Hart in March, 1746-7, a narrow piece of ground adjoining the yard of that inn and lying immediately on the south of the then existing barn, these two fragments of the original estate remaining separated from it until 1856, in which year they were purchased from the then owner, John Warden, and re-united to the Birth-Place garden.

10. The Western Cottages.—In the time of the great dramatist there were no buildings on the western portion of the Birth-Place land which adjoined Henley Street, none at least of a habitable character. It was not until late in the seventeenth century, at some time about the year 1675, that houses were erected upon the site, and these are described in 1694 as "all those three other tennementes with the appurtenances in the occupacion or tenures of Thomas Mountford, Samuell Lord, and late of Richard Wharam." The exact period is unknown, but at some time before July, 1730, the westernmost ground-floor room of the Birth-Place with the apartment immediately over it were formed into a separate cottage, the inner door-ways being blocked up and a new one made leading into the street. There were now four small distinct residences on the west of the estate, and these, with their little back-gardens or yards, were sold by the Harts in 1771 to Payton, who then became owner of all the property the southern end of which laid between the White Lion and the easternmost ground-floor rooms of the Birth-Place, the whole extending, in a nearly but not quite equable width, from the main street to the Guildpits. These four tenements continued to be separated from the other portion of the estate until 1848, when they were bought by public subscription, the one that had formed part of the Birth-Place being then restored to that house, while the three others were taken down and their sites thrown into the garden. It will thus be seen that, after the completion of the purchase made from Warden in 1856, all the above-mentioned Payton land reverted to the Shakespeare estate.

11. The Pieces of Land that were alienated by the Poet's Father.—In January, 1597, John Shakespeare conveyed to his neighbour, George Badger, a narrow strip of land on the extreme west of the estate. It measured only one foot and a half at each end, but was no less than eighty-four feet in length, and was purchased subject to the claims of the Lord of the Manor, the share of the chief-rent payable by Badger being no doubt apportioned at one penny, a circumstance which explains the variation between the amount of the Birth-Place rent which is given in the return of 1590 and "the yearlie rent of xij.*d.*" which is named in the poet's will. About the same time that this alienation was effected, 1597, John Shakespeare parted with another

fragment of his Henley Street land, but this second transfer was of a piece of ground on the east near the back of the Wool-Shop. This nook, which was purchased by Willis, the owner of the adjoining estate, is minutely described, in a settlement of 1611, as "all that platt of ground conteyninge seventene footes square, that is to say, seventene footes every way, with all and singular the edifices and buyldinges thereuppon latelie erected and buylded, scituate, lienge and beinge in Stretford-uppon-Avon in the county of Warr., in a streete there comonlie called Henly Street, betwixt the freholde of one John Shakespere on the west syde, and the freeholde of the aforesayd Edward Wyllys on the east syde." The description here given, which was most probably taken from the original conveyance, is repeated nearly verbally in a subsequent deed of 1613 excepting that the Wool-Shop is there called "a tenement late John Shakespere." It is to subsequent litigation respecting this plot of ground that we are indebted for our knowledge that it had belonged to the poet's father, and that Willis desired its acquisition for the site of some additional building the erection of which he had in contemplation. The evidences of these facts are recorded in an Answer which was filed in the Court of Requests in October, 1638, and which is of sufficient interest to be given at length,—"The said defendant, &c., thinketh and hopeth to prove that Edward Willis, of Kingsnorton, in the countie of Wigorn, in the said bill of complaint named, was in his life tyme lawfully seised in his demeasne as of fee of and in twoe small burgages or tenementes, with thappurtenances, in Stratford-upon-Avon, in the countie of Warwicke; and beinge desirous to make the same one tenement dwelling, and wantinge roome for that purpose, thereupon the said Edward Willis, &c., did about fortie yeares since purchase to him and his heires, of and from one Shakespeare, one parcell of land, conteyninge aboute seaventeene foote square (as hee taketh it), next adjoyninge to one of the said burgages or tenementes, and which parcell of ground and backside this defendant conceiveth to be the parcell of ground or backside intended by the said bill. And the said Edward Willis, &c., about fortie yeares since did make and erect one intire tenement upon a greate parte of the same; and havinge soe made, erected, and converted the same into one tenement, thereupon and after the same was soe made into one tenement, and had bene soe enjoyed for diverse yeares, hee the said Edward Willis, &c., by deed indented bearinge date the twentith daye of July, in the seaventh yeare of the raigne of our late soveraigne lord Kinge James of England, &c., did geve, grante, &c., to Thomas Osborne and Bartholemewe Austeyne, and their heires, all the said twoe burgages or tenementes and parcell of ground and backside, &c. (videlicet), all that messuage or tenement and burgage, with thappurtenaunces called the Bell, otherwise the signe of the Bell, heretofore used

or occupied in twoe tenementes, scituate and beinge in Stratford-upon-Avon, in the countie of Warwick, in a streete there commonly called Henley Streete, and nowe or late in the tenure or occupacion of Robert Brookes, or of his assignes or undertenantes, betweene the tenement of Thomas Horneby on the east parte, and the tenement late of William Shakespeare on the west parte, and the streete aforesaid on the south parte, and the King's highe way called Gilpittes on the north parte, &c." It will be observed that a little square plot is the only one here mentioned as having belonged to John Shakespeare, but it is almost certain that he also owned an adjoining slip which, from its position, must have been originally united with it, and which is described in the deed of 1611 as, "one little bakeside *therunto belonginge* conteyninge in lengthe from the sayd platt of ground on the west syde eight yardes, and on the east syde aleven yardes and a haulfe, and in breadthe at the upper ende towardes the platt of ground latelie buylded uppon seventene footes, and at the nether ende towardes the Gilpittes two yardes and a haulfe." There is no possibility of ascertaining the exact situations of these two little bits of land; but, from the narrow frontage owned by Willis, it may be concluded that the first-mentioned plot was at the back and not on the side of one of the two cottages which he was desirous of transforming into a single holding. The "one little bakeside therunto belonginge" was of course on the north of the square plot, and extended either to, or in the direction of, the Guildpits.

12. The Boundaries of the Henley Street Estate.—The frontage line of this estate cannot have been altered since the days of Shakespeare, but a precise identification of the other boundaries is now impossible. The recent plans of the several nooks of land that are now amalgamated, and there are no early ones, cannot be implicitly relied upon in this inquiry, for it may be taken for granted that, in the course of so many generations, there were numerous changes that occasioned essential differences in the aggregate, and here we have not the security of reference to the inconvertible Corporation property. The alterations thus gradually effected must, however, have been trivial on the eastern and western sides, the main variation being unquestionably in the northern boundary. That this is the case is apparent from the description of parcels in the Badger conveyance of 1597, in which it is distinctly stated that the western side then measured only about twenty-eight yards, not much more than two-thirds of the length which it had attained when in the hands of its modern private owners. This large discrepancy can only be explained on the assumption that there was a large space of manorial waste on the northern end of the Birth-Place land, and there is an important early notice in the town records which confirms this view. It is in a lease granted in 1563 of premises in

Henley Street that were only about thirty yards distant from the Wool-Shop, and which, according to the description therein given, "extendithe in lengthe from the seid strete unto a wast grounde callid the Gilpyttes." Much of this waste that was on the immediate north of the Birth-Place land appears to have been unenclosed in 1722, the length of the western side of the White Lion being then estimated at ninety-five feet six inches, and in 1717 Shakespeare Hart was "presented for not laying his gutter down to his water-course at his back-gates, and for digging a pitt in the highways there." There can, indeed, be no doubt that either the whole or a portion of the Guildpits consisted, in Shakespeare's time, of a wide piece of uncultivated land through which a shapeless road threaded its fluctuating course. Even so recently as the year 1752 the owner of the White Lion procured a lease from the holder of the manor of "part of the waste lying behind the said inn," between the road and the common-fields, which was no less than thirty feet in breadth. This plot was on the north, and there remained on the other side of the road until recent years a long and narrow strip of waste a portion of which was thrown into the Birth-Place garden in 1859.

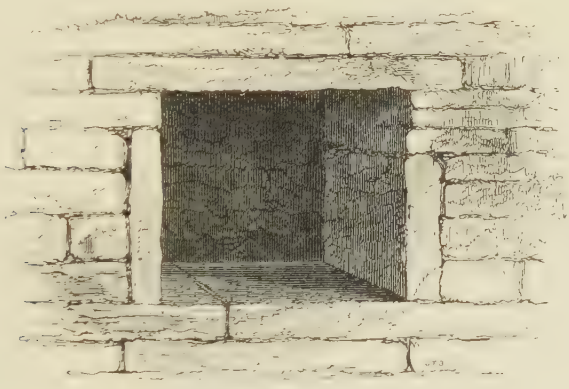
13. The Painted Glass.—In one of the window panes of the ground-floor room which is on the left of the entrance to the Birth-Place there was to be seen, in the last century, a piece of glass measuring about six inches in diameter upon which were depicted the arms of the Merchants of the Staple. It was first described by Ireland in his Views on the Avon, 1795, p. 191, having been taken away from the house about five (not thirty, as stated) years previously. This little work of art was then believed to have been a genuine relic of John Shakespeare's dwelling, but, according to the unimpeachable testimony of the late R. B. Wheler, "old Thomas Hart constantly declared that his great uncle, Shakspeare Hart, a glazier of this town, who had the new glazing of the Chapel windows, where it is known from Dugdale (Antiquities of Warwickshire, ed. 1656, p. 523) that such a shield existed, brought it from thence and introduced it into his own window," Guide to Stratford-upon-Avon, 1814. "Thomas Hart was well qualified to know the source from whence Shakspeare Hart derived this relick, being in his nineteenth year when his great uncle died, and I have no doubt but that his relation of this circumstance is correct," Wheler MS.

14. The Walnut-tree.—"An old walnut-tree which flourished before the door of Shakespear's father at Stratford-upon-Avon, at the birth of that poet, having been lately cut down, several gentlemen had images, resembling that in Westminster Abbey, carved from it," Annual Register for 1765, p. 113. A little box, made by Sharp from the wood of this tree and formerly in the possession of the Rev. Stephen Nason, vicar of Stratford from 1763 to 1787, has been presented by his descendant, Mr. J. J. Nason, J. P., to the museum of that town.

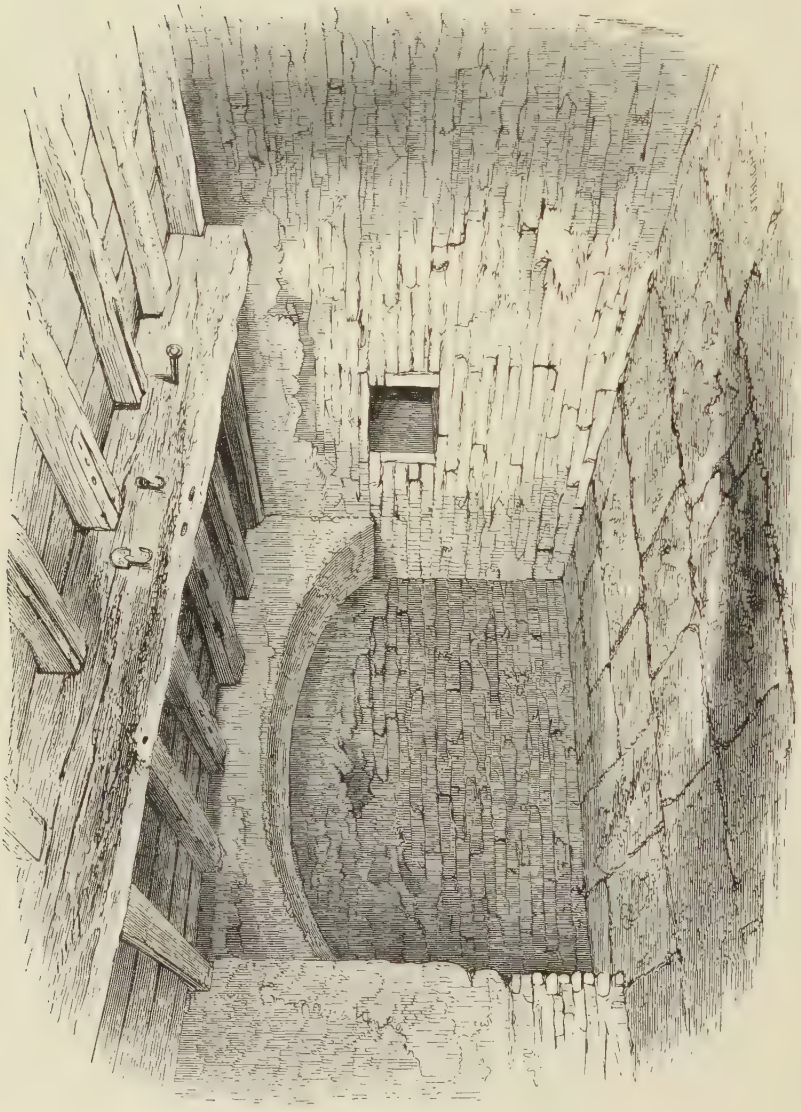
15. The Bass-relief of David and Goliath.—In the Wool-Shop, "over the fire-place in the south-east angle of the front parlour," as Wheler observes in 1824, there was formerly a bass-relief in stucco representing the encounter between David and Goliath. The earliest notice that has been discovered of this object is given in the following terms in Ireland's Views on the Avon, 1795, pp. 192, 193,—"in a lower room of the public house, which is part of the premises wherein Shakspeare was born, is a curious antient ornament over the chimney, relieved in plaister, which, from the date 1606 that was originally marked on it, was probably put up at the time, and possibly by the poet himself; although a rude attempt at historic representation, I have yet thought it worth copying, as it has, I believe, passed unnoticed by the multitude of visitors that have been on this spot, or at least has never been made public; and to me it was enough that it held a conspicuous place in the dwelling-house of one who is himself the ornament and pride of the island he inhabited. In 1759, it was repaired and painted in a variety of colours by the old Mr. Thomas Harte before mentioned, who assured me the motto then round it had been in the old black letter, and dated 1606. The motto runs thus:—Golith coms with sword and spear,= And David with a sling;=Although Golith rage and sweare,=Down David doth him bring." There is no improbability in the surmise that the ornament was placed in the house as early as 1606, but it is most unlikely that its introduction was owing in any way to the poet, or that it can have a tangible connexion with his history. It was taken from the Wool-Shop into the Birth-Place about the year 1813, and subsequently removed altogether from the premises. In this divorce there was no calamity. The original black-letters of the distich had been altered to Roman ones before the time of Ireland's visit to Stratford (Confessions, 1805, p. 26), and, in a more recent transformation of the relic, its attractions have been sought to be enhanced by the addition of the fabulous words,—"the motto by Shakespeare."

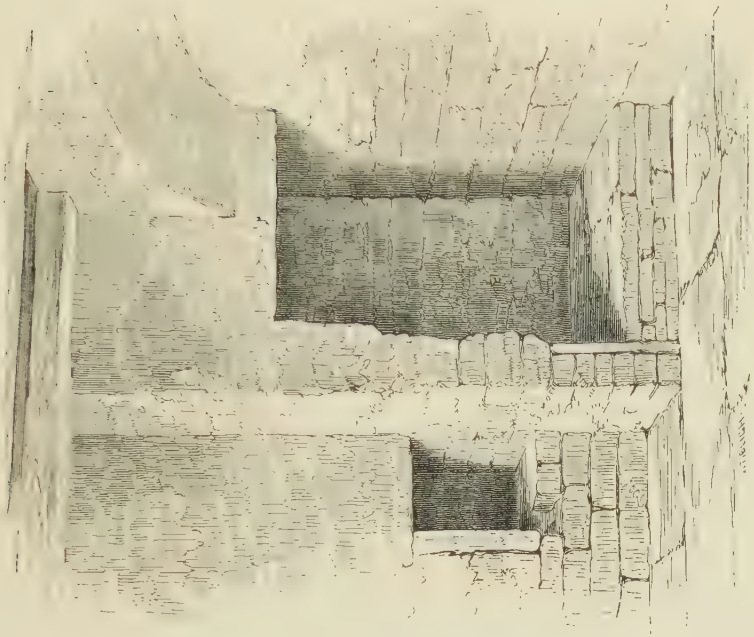
THE BIRTH-PLACE CELLAR.

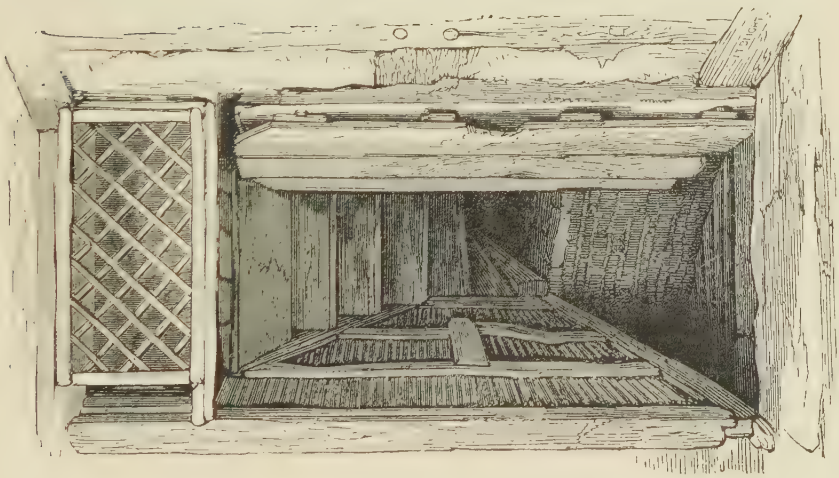
It is certain that, at this late day, there is no apartment in either the Birth-Place or Wool-Shop which presents exactly the same appearance under which it was viewed in the boyhood of the great dramatist, but unquestionably the nearest approach to the realization of such a memorial is to be found in the cellar which is under the floor of what is usually termed the kitchen of the former house. A cellar is that part of an ancient house which is always the least exposed to serious modification, and it may be confidently asserted that the structural form of this little room could not have been materially altered since its original construction in the sixteenth century.

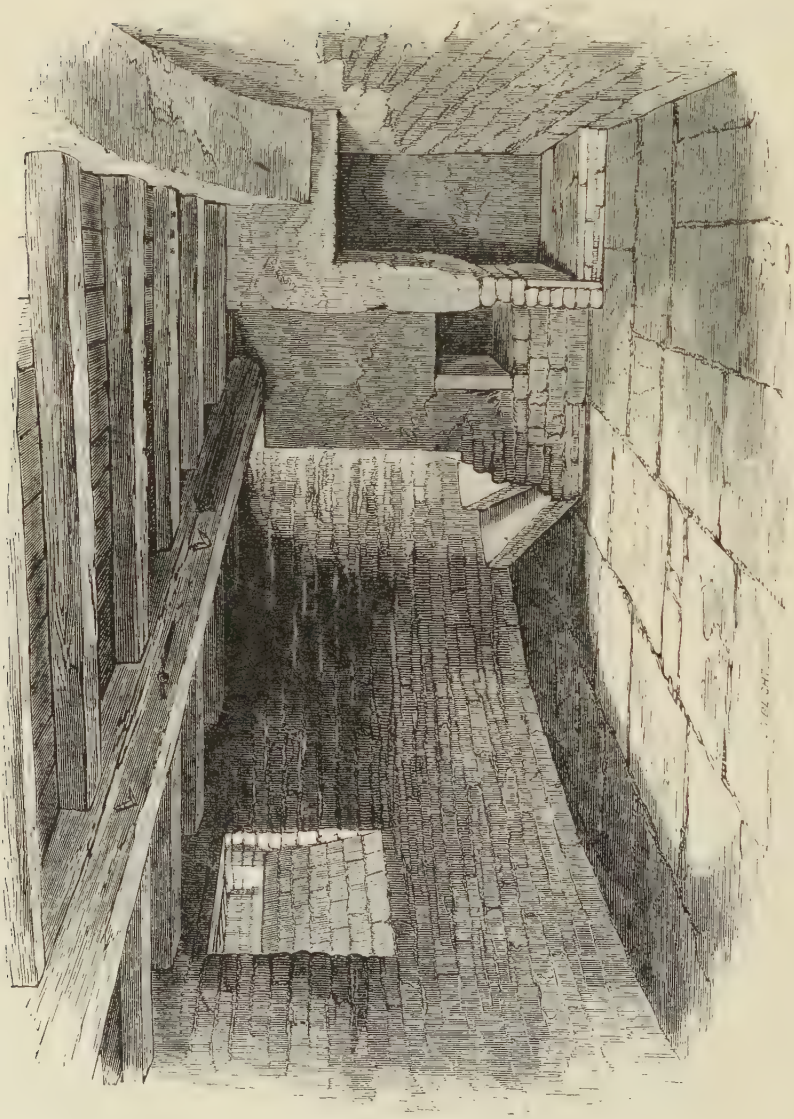


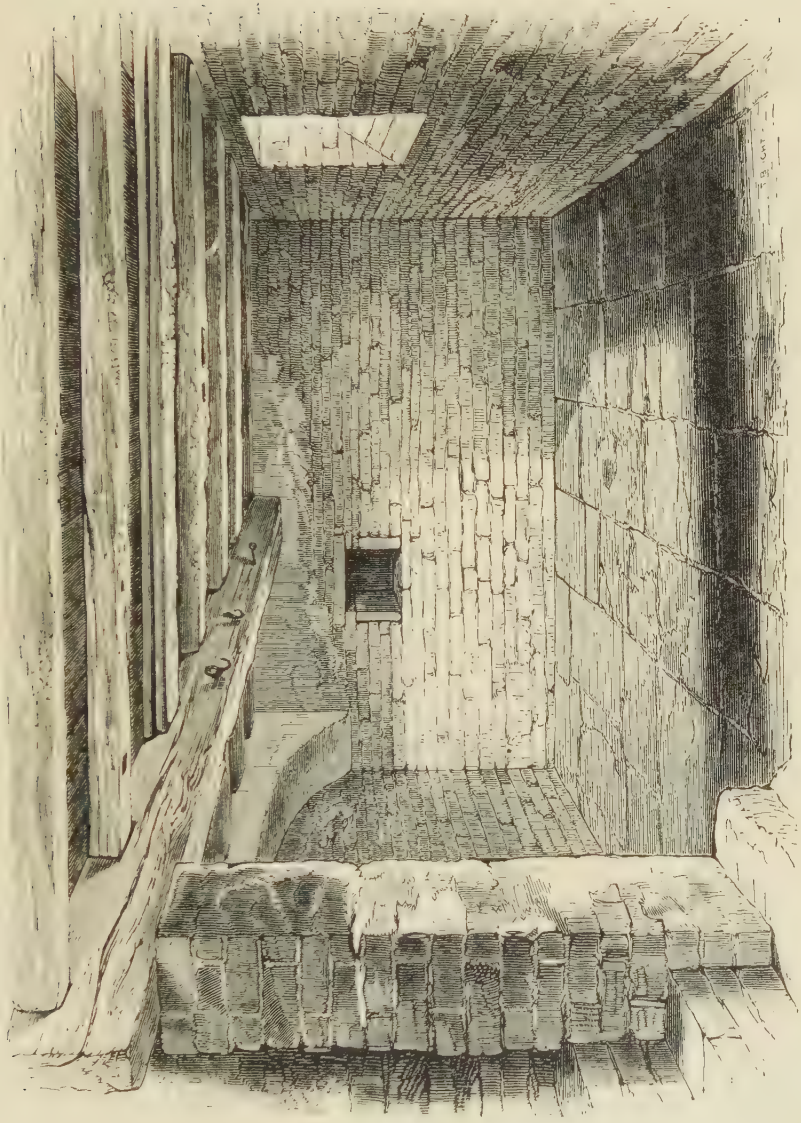
Deeply impressed with its extremely interesting character, I engaged Mr. Blight in 1864 to make sketches of every portion of the cellar, and it is believed that, in the six engravings here given, the means of delineation are exhausted. It should be added that modern pillars, which have been erected under the impression that they are essential to the support of the roof, are here omitted.











THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM.

The following notes on the sonnets and other brief pieces, which form this quaint collection, may be useful for reference. The lines in italics are the opening ones of the several poems, here arranged in the order in which they are given in the edition of 1599.

1. When my love swears that she is made of truth.—This is the 138th Sonnet in the collective edition of 1609, but the present version contains a few important variations from the text there given. In the 1640 edition of the Poems it is styled "false beleefe," a heading which, in my copy, is altered in manuscript to "mutuall flatterie."

2. Two loves I have of Comfort and Despair.—This is the 144th Sonnet in ed. 1609. There are several differences, chiefly verbal, between the two copies. In the Poems, ed. 1640, it is headed, "A Temptation."

3. Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye.—This sonnet, with a few various readings, is also found in the comedy of Love's Labour's Lost, ed. 1598. It is styled "fast and loose" in the Poems, ed. 1640, the words, "or perjurie excused," being added in old manuscript in my copy of that volume.

4. Sweet Cytherea, sitting by a brook.—The only early printed copies of this, which are known to exist, are those in the two impressions of the Passionate Pilgrim and in the 1640 edition of the Poems. An old manuscript transcript of it is mentioned below, and, in the last-named printed copy, it is headed, "a sweet provocation."

5. If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?—This sonnet, with a few variations, occurs in Love's Labour's Lost, ed. 1598, and it is styled "a constant vow" in the Poems, ed. 1640.

6 and *7. Scarce had the sun dried up the dewy morn;* and, *Fair is my love, but not so fair as fickle.*—The only early copies of these, which are known to exist, are in the two impressions of the Passionate Pilgrim and in the 1640 edition of the Poems. They are headed respectively in the last work, "cruell deceit" and "the unconstant lover," altered to "cruell bashfulnes" and "faire and fickle" in my manuscript annotated copy of that edition.

8. If music and sweet poetry agree.—This sonnet is taken from the latter part of Barnfield's Encomion of Lady Pecunia, 1598, a small collection of poems with this separate title-page,—"Poems: in Divers Humors.—London, Printed by G. S. for John Jaggard, and are to be

solde at his shoppe neere Temple-barre, at the Signe of the Hand and starre. 1598." Barnfield calls these poems "fruits of unriper yeares," and expressly claims their authorship in terms beside which Jaggard's presumptive evidence is of no value. The sonnet in question is the first in the collection, and is inscribed "to his friend Maister R. L. in praise of musique and poetrie." It is true that this and other pieces are omitted in the second edition of Lady Pecunia, 1605, but so also is nearly the whole of the collection entitled Poems in Divers Humors, so that no substantial argument can rest upon the absence of the two Pilgrim sonnets from that edition. The present one is headed, "friendly concord," in the Poems, ed. 1640, and to that title are added the words, "of musick and poetry," in my annotated copy of that work.

9. Fair was the morn when the fair queen of love.—The only early printed copies of this, which are known to exist, are those in the two impressions of the Passionate Pilgrim and in the 1640 edition of the Poems. The second line being deficient in all these copies, an endeavour was made, late in the reign of Charles the First, to make a perfect text by substituting the following three in lieu of the present second and third lines,—"Hoping to meete Adonis in that place,= Addrest her early to a certain grove,=Where hee was wont the savage bore to chase." This alteration is found on the margin of my copy of ed. 1640 in a handwriting which is nearly contemporary with the date of that publication.

10. Sweet rose, fair flower, untimely pluck'd, soon faded.—The only early printed copies of this, known to exist, are those in the two impressions of the Passionate Pilgrim and in the 1640 edition of the Poems. In this last-named work it bears the title of, "Loves Losse."

11. Venus, with Adonis sitting by her.—This sonnet, with four lines entirely different and a few minor alterations, is found in B. Griffin's Fidessa more Chaste than Kinde, 16mo, 1596. It also occurs with No. 4 in a manuscript, written about the year 1625, preserved at Warwick Castle, the latter poem being there given as a Second Part in continuation of the present one, which is styled "foolish disdaine" in the Poems, ed. 1640.

12. Crabbed age and youth cannot live together.—This is the earliest known version of a popular ditty frequently noticed by writers of the seventeenth century. The copy of it which is given in the Poems, ed. 1640, is headed, "Ancient Antipothy."

13. Beauty is but a vain and doubtful good.—A version of this song entitled Beauty's Value, is printed in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1750, p. 521, as from a "corrected manuscript," and again in Howard's Miscellaneous Pieces, 1765, as "from a very correct manuscript of William Shakespear, in a private hand." In the copy in the 1640 edition of the Poems it is called "beauties valuation."

14 and *15. Good night, good rest, ah! neither be my share;—It was a lording's daughter, the fairest one of three.*—These two canzonets are found only in the Passionate Pilgrim and in the 1640 edition of the Poems, being in the last styled respectively, "loath to depart," and "a duell." After the first one there commences, in the original edition of 1599, a separate part of twelve leaves with another title-page—"Sonnets to sundry notes of Musicke. At London—Printed for W. Jaggard, and are to be sold by W. Leake, at the Greyhound in Paules Churchyard, 1599."

16. On a day, alack the day!—This poem, with two additional lines, occurs in Love's Labour's Lost, 1598. It is also introduced, with Shakespeare's name attached to it, in England's Helicon, eds. 1600 and 1614. The copy in the Poems, ed. 1640, is headed, Love-sicke.

17. My flocks feed not, my ewes breed not.—There is a somewhat brief version of this song in the collection of Madrigals, &c., of Thomas Weelkes, 1597, this person being the composer of the music but not necessarily the author of the words. A copy of it, as it is seen in the Passionate Pilgrim, occurs in England's Helicon, 1600, entitled, "The vnknowne Sheepheards complaint," and there subscribed *Ignoto*, so it is clear that Bodenham was unacquainted with the name of its author. There is an early version of the song in MS. Harl. 6910, and it is called "loves labour lost" in ed. 1640.

18. Whenas thine eye hath chose the dame.—A very early manuscript of this poem, with numerous variations, is preserved in a miscellany compiled, there is reason to believe, some few years before the appearance of the Passionate Pilgrim. The copy of it which is given in the Poems, ed. 1640, is termed "wholesome counsell."

19. Live with me, and be my love.—The first of these very pretty songs is incomplete, and the second, called *Loues answere*, still more so. In England's Helicon, 1600, the former is given to Marlowe, the latter to Ignoto; and Walton, in his Compleat Angler, 1653, mentions them together as "that smooth song which was made by Kit Marlow now at least fifty years ago; and an *answer* to it, which was made by Sir Walter Raleigh in his yonger days;—old-fashioned poetry, but choicely good." Both these songs were exceedingly popular, and are afterwards found amongst the street ballads. The first is quoted in the Merry Wives of Windsor, and the music to it is given in Corkine's Second Book of Ayres, fol. Lond. 1612.

20. As it fell upon a day.—This charming idyl occurs, with the absence of two lines, amongst the Poems in Divers Humors appended to Barnfield's Encomion of Lady Pecunia, 1598, and the first twenty-six lines, with the addition of two new ones, are found in England's Helicon, 1600. The latter version follows in that work the No. 17 of this list, is also subscribed, *Ignoto*, and is headed,—"Another of the

same Sheepheards." The probability is that the copies of these little poems, as given in the Helicon, were taken from a commonplace-book in which the names of the authors were not recorded; the two supplementary lines, just noticed, having the appearance of being an unauthorised couplet improvised for the sake of giving a neater finish to the abridgment.

The Passionate Pilgrim was first published in the year 1599, and the third edition, to which were added the two poems taken from Heywood's Troia Britanica, appeared in 1612. No copy of the second is known to exist, and even the date of its publication has not been recorded. In some issues of Lintott's reprints of Shakespeare's poems, 1709-1711, that of the Passionate Pilgrim has a title-page bearing the date of 1609, but, as in the cases of the Venus and the Lucrece in the same collection, the last-mentioned year is clearly given merely to range with that of the first edition of the Sonnets.

Only two copies of the third edition have as yet been discovered, each with a title-page bearing the name of Shakespeare as the author of the work; but in one of them, that in the Bodleian, there is also a substituted title in which the words, "by W. Shakespere," are omitted, there being, however, no other variation. It is evident from what Heywood says, in 1612, that the omission was due to the remonstrances of Shakespeare himself, for otherwise a cancel of the additional poems would have met the objections raised by the former.

The incongruous title given to this little work must be attributed to Jaggard's own caprice. So Wither, in his Schollers Purgatory, 1625, speaking of a dishonest publisher, observes,—"if he get any written coppy into his powre likely to be vendible, whether the author be willing or no, he will publish it; and it shall be contrived and named also according to his own pleasure, which is the reason so many good bookes come forth imperfect and with foolish titles;—nay, he oftentymes gives bookes such names as, in his opinion, will make them saleable, when there is litle or nothing in the whole volume suitable to such a tytle." Artifices of these kinds were common throughout the days of Shakespeare's literary career.

LIFE-TIME EDITIONS.

This list of the contemporary editions of Shakespeare's poems and dramas, here arranged in chronological order and printed V. L., will give a fair idea of the extent in one direction of the literary popularity that he enjoyed in his own life-time. The titles of spurious works that are found either with his name in full, or in abridgment, are also included ; but those with merely his initials have not been admitted. There is no distinct evidence that intentional deception was contemplated in any of the latter cases.

i. Venvs and Adonis—Vilia miretur vulgus : mihi flauus Apollo=Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.—London—Imprinted by Richard Field, and are to be sold at the signe of the white Greyhound in Paules Church-yard. 1593.—ii. Titus Andronicus his Lamentable Tragedy, acted by the Earls of Derby, Pembroke and Essex, their Servants. 1594. *This description is taken from a notice in Langbaine's Account of the English Dramatick Poets, 1691, p. 464, no copy of this edition of the play being now known to exist.*—iii. The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the death of the good Duke Humphrey : And the banishment and death of the Duke of Suffolke, and the Tragicall end of the proud Cardinall of Winchester, with the notable Rebellion of Iacke Cade : And the Duke of Yorkes first claime vnto the Crowne. London—Printed by Thomas Creed, for Thomas Millington, and are to be sold at his shop vnder Saint Peters Church in Cornwall. 1594.—iv. Lvcrece.—London.—Printed by Richard Field, for Iohn Harrison, and are to be sold at the signe of the white Greyhound in Paules Churh-yard®. 1594.—v. Venvs and Adonis. Vilia miretur vulgus : mihi flauus Apollo= Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua. London.—Imprinted by Richard Field, and are to be sold at the signe of the white Greyhound in Paules Church-yard. 1594.—vi. The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt, with the whole contention betweene the two Houses Lancaster and Yorke, as it was sundrie times acted by the Right Honourable the Earle of Pembrooke his seruants.—Printed at London by P. S. for Thomas Millington, and are to be sold at his shoppe vnder Saint Peters Church in Cornwal. 1595.—vii. Venvs and Adonis. Vilia miretur vulgus : mihi flauus Apollo = Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua. Imprinted at London by R. F. for Iohn Harison. 1596.—viii. An Excellent conceited Tragedie of Romeo and Iuliet. As it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publiquely, by the right Honourable the L. of Hunsdon his Seruants.—London, Printed by Iohn Danter. 1597.—ix. The Tragedie of King Richard the second. As it hath beene publikely acted by the right Honourable the Lorde Chamberlaine his Seruants. London—Printed by Valentine Simmes for Androw Wise, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules church yard at the signe of the Angel. 1597.—x. The Tragedy of King Richard the third. Containing, His treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence : the pittiefull murther of his iunocent® nephewes : his tyrannicall vsurpation : with the whole course of his detested life, and most deserued death. As it hath beene lately Acted by the Right honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants.—At London—Printed by Valentine Sims, for Andrew Wise, dwelling in Paules Chuch-yard®, at the Signe of the Angell. 1597.—xi. Lvcrece. At London,

Printed by P. S. for Iohn Harrison. 1598.—xii. The Hystorie of Henrie the Fourth, —*No copy of this first edition of the play, having a title, is known to exist; the only portion of it, hitherto discovered, being a fragment of the text with the above head-line.* —xiii. A Pleasant Conceited Comedie called, Loues labors lost. As it was presented before her Highnes this last Christmas. Newly corrected and augmented By W. Shakespere.—Imprinted at London by W. W. for Cutbert Burby. 1598.—xiv. The Tragedie of King Richard the second. As it hath beene publikely acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. By William Shake-speare. London. —Printed by Valentine Simmes for Andrew Wise, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules churchyard at the signe of the Angel. 1598.—xv. The Tragedie of King Richard the third. Conteining his treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence: the pitiful murther of his innocent Nephewes: his tyrannicall vsurpation: with the whole course of his detested life, and most deserued death. As it hath beene lately Acted by the Right honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. By William Shake-speare.—London—Printed by Thomas Creede, for Andrew Wise, dwelling in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Angell. 1598.—xvi. The History of Henrie the Fovrth; With the battell at Shrewsburie, betweene the King and Lord Henry Percy, surnamed Henrie Hotspur of the North. With the humorous conceits of Sir Iohn Falstalffe. At London, Printed by P. S. for Andrew Wise, dwelling in Paules Churchyard, at the signe of the Angell. 1598.—xvii. Venvs and Adonis.—Vilia miretur vulgus: mihi flauus Apollo = Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.—Imprinted at London for William Leake, dwelling in Paules Churchyard at the signe of the Greyhound. 1599.—xviii. The Most Excellent and lamentable Tragedie, of Romeo and Iuliet. Newly corrected, augmented, and amended: As it hath bene sundry times publiquely acted, by the right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his Seruants. —London—Printed by Thomas Creede, for Cuthbert Burby, and are to be sold at his shop neare the Exchange. 1599.—xix. The Passionate Pilgrime. By W. Shakespeare. At London—Printed for W. Iaggard, and are to be sold by W. Leake, at the Grey-hound in Paules Churchyard. 1599.—xx. The History of Henrie the Fovrth; With the battell at Shrewsburie, betweene the King and Lord Henry Percy, surnamed Henry Hotspur of the North. With the humorous conceits of Sir Iohn Falstalffe. Newly corrected by W. Shake-speare. At London, Printed by S. S. for Andrew Wise, dwelling in Paules Churchyard, at the signe of the Angell. 1599.—xxi. The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the death of the good Duke Humphrey: And the banishment and death of the Duke of Suffolke, and the tragicall end of the prowd Cardinall of Winchester, with the notable rebellion of Iacke Cade: And the Duke of Yorkes first clayme to the crowne. London: Printed by W. W. for Thomas Millington, and are to be sold at his shoppe vnder Saint Peters Church in Cornewall. 1600.—xxii. The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the death of the good Duke Humphrey: And the banishment and death of the Duke of Suffolke, and the Tragical end of the prowd Cardinall of Winchester, with the notable Rebellion of Iacke Cade: And the Duke of Yorkes first clayme to the Crowne. London—Printed by Valentine Simmes for Thomas Millington, and are to be sold at his shop vnder S. Peters church in Cornewall. 1600.—xxiii. Lvcrece—London. Printed by I. H. for Iohn Harison. 1600.—xxiv. The True Tragedie of Richarde Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henrie the sixt: With the whole contention betweene the two Houses, Lancaster and Yorke; as it was sundry times acted by the Right Honourable the Earle of Pembrooke his seruantes. Printed at Londou® by W. W. for Thomas Millington, and are to be sold at his shoppe vnder Saint Peters Church in Cornewall. 1600.—xxv. The first part Of the true & honorable history, of the Life of Sir Iohn Old-castle, the good Lord Cobham. As it hath bene lately acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Notingham Lord High Admirall of England, his

Seruants. Written by William Shakespeare. London—printed for T. P. 1600.—xxvi. The Cronicle History of Henry the fift, With his battell fought at Agin Court in France. Togither with Auntient Pistoll. As it hath bene sundry times playd by the Right honorable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants.—London—Printed by Thomas Creede, for Tho. Millington, and Iohn Busby. And are to be sold at his house in Carter Lane, next the Powle head. 1600.—xxvii. The Second part of Henrie the fourth, continuing to his death, and coronation of Henrie the fift. With the humours of sir Iohn Falstaffe, and swaggering Pistoll. As it hath been sundrie times publikely acted by the right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Written by William Shakespeare. London—Printed by V. S. for Andrew Wise, and William Aspley. 1600.—xxviii. The Second part of Henrie the fourth, continuing to his death, and coronation of Henrie the fift. With the humours of sir Iohn Falstaffe, &c., 1600. *This second edition contains two additional leaves, but its title-page is identical with that last given.*—xxix. Much adoe about Nothing. As it hath been sundrie times publikely acted by the right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Written by William Shakespeare. London—Printed by V. S. for Andrew Wise, and William Aspley. 1600.—xxx. A Midsommer nights dreame. As it hath beene sundry times publickely acted, by the Right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Written by William Shakespeare. Imprinted at London, for Thomas Fisher, and are to be soulde at his shoppe, at the Signe of the White Hart, in Fleete-streete. 1600.—xxxi. The Excellent History of the Merchant of Venice, With the extreme cruelty of Shylocke the Iew towards the saide Merchant, in cutting a iust pound of his flesh. And the obtaining of Portia, by the choyse of three Caskets. Written by W. Shakespeare.—Printed by J. Roberts, 1600.—xxxii. A Midsommer nights dreame. As it hath beene sundry times publikely acted, by the Right Honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Written by William Shakespeare. Printed by Iames Roberts, 1600.—xxxiii. The most lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus. As it hath sundry times beene playde by the Right Honourable the Earle of Pembrooke, the Earle of Darbie, the Earle of Sussex, and the Lorde Chamberlaine theyr Seruants. At London, Printed by I. R. for Edward White and are to bee solde at his shoppe, at the little North doore of Paules, at the signe of the Gun. 1600.—xxxiv. The most excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice. With the extreame crueltie of Shylocke the Iewe towards the sayd Merchant, in cutting a iust pound of his flesh : and the obtayning of Portia by the choyse of three chests. As it hath beene diuers times acted by the Lord Chamberlaine his Seruants. Written by William Shakespeare.—At London, Printed by I. R. for Thomas Heyes, and are to be sold in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Greene Dragon. 1600.—xxxv. A "Poeticall Essaie on the Turtle and Phœnix," published in "Loves Martyr : or, Rosalins Complaint. Allegorically shadowing the truth of Loue, in the constant Fate of the Phœnix and Turtle."—London, Imprinted for E. B. 1601.—xxxvi. A Most pleasaunt and excellent conceited Comedie, of Syr Iohn Falstaffe, and the merrie Wiues of Windsor. Entermixed with sundrie variable and pleasing humors, of Syr Hugh the Welch Knight, Iustice Shallow, and his wise Cousin M. Slender. With the swaggering vaine of Auncient Pistoll, and Corporall Nym. By William Shakespeare. As it hath bene diuers times Acted by the right Honorable my Lord Chamberlaines seruants. Both before her Maiestie, and else-where. London—Printed by T. C. for Arthur Iohnson, and are to be sold at his shop in Powles Church-yard, at the signe of the Flower de Leuse and the Crowne. 1602.—xxxvii. The Tragedie of King Richard the third. Conteining his treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence : the pittifull murther of his innocent Nephewes : his tyrannicall vsurpation : with the whole course of his detested life, and most deserued death. As it hath bene lately Acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Newly augmented, By William Shakespeare.—London—Printed by Thomas Creede, for Andrew Wise,

dwelling in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Angell. 1602.—xxxviii. Venvs and Adonis.—Vilia miretur vulgus: mihi flauus Apollo = Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua. Imprinted at London for William Leake, dwelling at the signe of the Holy Ghost, in Pauls Churchyard. 1602.—xxxix. Venvs and Adonis.—Vilia miretur vulgus, mihi flauus Apollo = Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua. Imprinted at London for William Leake, dwelling at the signe of the Holy Ghost, in Paules Church-yard. 1602.—xl. The Chronicle History of Henry the fift, With his battell fought at Agin Court in France. Together with Auntient Pistoll. As it hath bene sundry times playd by the Right honorable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. London—Printed by Thomas Creede, for Thomas Pauier, and are to be sold at his shop in Cornhill, at the signe of the Cat and Parrets neare the Exchange. 1602.—xli. The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke—By William Shake-speare. As it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where—At London—printed for N. L. and Iohn Trundell. 1603.—xlii. The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.—At London, Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be sold at his shoppe vnder Saint Dunstons Church in Fleetstreet. 1604.—xliii. The History of Henrie the fourth, With the battell at Shrewsburie, betweene the King, and Lord Henry Percy, surnamed Henry Hotspur of the North. With the humorous conceits of Sir Iohn Falstalffe. Newly corrected by W. Shake-speare. London—Printed by Valentine Simmes, for Mathew Law, and are to be solde at his shop in Paules Churchyard, at the signe of the Fox. 1604.—xliv. The Tragedie of King Richard the third. Conteining his treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence: the pittifull murther of his innocent Nephewes: his tyrannicall vsurpation: with the whole course of his detested life, and most deserued death. As it hath bin lately Acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Newly augmented, By William Shake-speare.—London,—Printed by Thomas Creede, and are to be sold by Mathew Lawe, dwelling in Paules Church-yard, at the Signe of the Foxe, neare S. Austins gate, 1605.—xlv. The London Prodigall. As it was plaide by the Kings Maiesties seruants. By William Shakespeare,—London. Printed by T. C. for Nathaniel Butter, and are to be sold neere S. Austins gate, at the signe of the pyde Bull. 1605.—xlvi. The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.—At London, Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be sold at his shoppe vnder Saint Dunstons Church in Fleetstreet. 1605.—xlvii. Lvcrece. At London, Printed be® N. O. for Iohn Harison. 1607.—xlviii. The Tragedie of King Richard the Second: With new additions of the Parliament Sceane, and the deposing of King Richard, As it hath been lately acted by the Kinges Maiesties seruantes, at the Globe. By William Shake-speare. At London, Printed by W. W. for Mathew Law, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Foxe. 1608.—xlix. M. William Shake-speare, His True Chronicle History of the life and death of King Lear, and his three Daughters. With the vnfortunate life of Edgar, sonne and heire to the Earle of Glocester, and his sullen and assumed humour of Tom of Bedlam. As it was plaid before the Kings Maiesty at White-Hall, vppon S. Stephens night, in Christmas Hollidaies. By his Maiesties Seruants, playing vsually at the Globe on the Banck-side.—Printed for Nathaniel Butter. 1608.—l. A Yorkshire Tragedy. Not so New as Lamentable and true. Acted by his Maiesties Players at the Globe. Written by W. Shakspeare.—At London—Printed by R. B. for Thomas Pauier and are to bee sold at his shop on Cornhill, neere to the exchange. 1608—li. The Chronicle History of Henry the fift, with his battell fought at Agin Court in France. Together with ancient Pistoll. As it hath bene sundry times playd by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his

Seruants. Printed for T. P. 1608.—lii. The History of Henry the fourth, With the battell at Shrewseburie, betweene the King, and Lord Henry Percy, surnamed Henry Hotspur of the North. With the humorous conceites of Sir Iohn Falstaffe. Newly corrected by W. Shake-speare. London, Printed for Mathew Law, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules Church-yard, neere vnto S. Augustines gate, at the signe of the Foxe. 1608.—liii. The Tragedie of King Richard the second. As it hath been publikely acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruantes. By William Shake-speare. London, Printed by W. W. for Mathew Law, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Foxe. 1608.—liv. M. William Shak-speare: His True Chronicle Historie of the life and death of King Lear and his three Daughters. With the vnfortunate life of Edgar, sonne and heire to the Earle of Gloster, and his sullen and assumed humor of Tom of Bedlam: As it was played before the Kings Maiestie at Whitehall vpon S. Stephans night in Christmas Hollidayes. By his Maiesties seruants playing vsually at the Gloabe on the Bancke-side.—London, Printed for Nathaniel Butter, and are to be sold at his shop in Pauls Church-yard at the signe of the Pide Bull neere St. Austins Gate. 1608.—lv. The Famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid. Excellently expressing the beginning of their loues, with the conceited wooing of Pandarus Prince of Licia. Written by William Shakespeare.—London—Imprinted by G. Eld for R. Bonian and H. Walley, and are to be sold at the spred Eagle in Paules Church-yeard, ouer against the great North doore. 1609.—lvi. The Historie of Troylus and Cresseida. As it was acted by the Kings Maiesties seruants at the Globe. Written by William Shakespeare.—London—Imprinted by G. Eld for R Bonian and H. Walley, and are to be sold at the spred Eagle in Paules Church-yeard, ouer against the great North doore. 1609.—lvii. The Late, And much admired Play, Called Pericles, Prince of Tyre. With the true Relation of the whole Historie, aduentures, and fortunes of the said Prince: As also, The no lesse strange, and worthy accidents, in the Birth and Life, of his Daughter Mariana. As it hath been diuers and sundry times acted by his Maiesties Seruants, at the Globe on the Banck-side. By William Shakespeare. Imprinted at London for Henry Gosson, and are to be sold at the signe of the Sunne in Pater-noster row, &c. 1609.—lviii. The Late, And much admired Play, Called Pericles, Prince of Tyre. With &c. 1609. *The title of this, the second edition, is identical with that last given.*—lix. Shake-speares Sonnets. Neuer before Imprinted.—At London—By G. Eld for T. T. and are to be solde by Iohn Wright, dwelling at Christ Church gate. 1609.—lx. Shake-speares Sonnets. Neuer before Imprinted.—At London—By G. Eld for T. T. and are to be solde by William Aspley. 1609.—lxi. The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedie, of Romeo and Juliet. As it hath beene sundrie times publiquely Acted, by the Kings Maiesties Seruants at the Globe. Newly corrected, augmented, and amended:—London—Printed for Iohn Smethwick, and are to be sold at his Shop in Saint Dunstanes Church-yard, in Fleetestreete vnder the Dyall. 1609.—lxii. The most lamentable Tragedie of Titus Andronicus. As it hath svndry times beene plaide by the Kings Maiesties Seruants. London, Printed for Eedward White, and are to be solde at his shoppe, nere the little North dore of Pauls, at the signe of the Gun. 1611.—lxiii. The First and second Part of the troublesome Raigne of John King of England. With the discouerie of King Richard Cordelions Base sonne (vulgarly named, The Bastard Fawconbridge:) Also, the death of King Iohn at Swinstead Abbey. As they were (sundry times) lately acted by the Queenes Maiesties Players. Written by W. Sh.—Imprinted at London by Valentine Simmes for Iohn Helme, and are to be sold at his shop in Saint Dunstons Churchyard in Fleetestreet. 1611.—lxiv. The Tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppy.—At London, Printed for Iohn Smethwicke and are to be sold at his shoppe in Saint Dunstons Church yeard in Fleetstreet. Vnder the Diall, 1611.—lxv. The Most

Excellent And Lamentable Tragedie, of Romeo and Ivliet. As it hath beene sundrie times publikely Acted, by the Kings Maiesties Seruants at the Globe. Newly Corrected, augmented, and amended.—London, Printed for Iohn Smethwicke, and are to bee sold at his Shop in Saint Dunstanes Church-yard, in Fleetestreete vnder the Dyall. *The position here given to this title-page is conjectural, the edition being undated.*—lxvi. The Most Excellent And Lamentable Tragedie, of Romeo and Ivliet. As it hath beene sundrie times publikely Acted, by the Kings Maiesties Seruants at the Globe. Written by W. Shake-speare. Newly Corrected, augmented, and amended.—London, Printed for Iohn Smethwicke, and are to bee sold at his Shop in Saint Dunstanes Church-yard, in Fleetestreete vnder the Dyall. *This is the same edition as the last with merely an alteration in the title-page.*—lxvii. The Late, And much admired Play, Called Pericles, Prince of Tyre. With the true Relation of the whole History, aduentures, and fortunes of the sayd Prince: As also, The no lesse strange, and worthy accidents, in the Birth and Life, of his Daughter Mariana. As it hath beene diuers and sundry times acted by his Maiestyes Seruants, at the Globe on the Banck-side. By William Shakespeare. Printed at London by S. S. 1611.—lxviii. The Tragedie of King Richard the third. Containing his treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence: the pittifull murther of his innocent Nephewes: his tyrannicall vsurpation: with the whole course of his detested life, and most deserued death. As it hath beene lately Acted by the Kings Maiesties seruants. Newly augmented, By William Shake-speare. London, Printed by Thomas Creede, and are to be sold by Mathew Lawe, dwelling in Pauls Church-yard, at the Signe of the Foxe, neare S. Austins gate, 1612.—lxix. The Passionate Pilgrime. or Certaine Amorous Sonnets, betweene Venus and Adonis, newly corrected and augmented. By W. Shakespere. The third Edition. Where-unto is newly added two Loue-Epistles, the first from Paris to Hellen, and Hellens answere backe againe to Paris. Printed by W. Iaggard. 1612.—lxx. The History of Henrie the fourth, With the Battell at Shrewseburie, betweene the King, and Lord Henrie Percy, surnamed Henrie Hotspur of the North. With the humorous conceites of Sir Iohn Falstaffe. Newly corrected by W. Shake-speare. London, Printed by W. W. for Mathew Law, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules Church-yard, neere vnto S. Augustines Gate, at the signe of the Foxe. 1613. —lxxi. The Tragedie of King Richard the Second: With new additions of the Parliament Sceane, and the deposing of King Richard. As it hath been lately acted by the Kinges Maiesties seruants, at the Globe. By William Shake-speare. At London, Printed for Mathew Law, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Foxe. 1615.—lxxii. The Rape of Lvcrece. By Mr. William Shakespeare. Newly Reuised. London: Printed by T. S. for Roger Iackson, and are to be solde at his shop neere the Conduit in Fleet-street. 1616.

THE MULBERRY-TREE.

For nearly a century and a half it has been the unvarying tradition of Stratford-on-Avon that the great dramatist planted a mulberry sapling at New Place with his own hands. The truth of this circumstance, in itself highly probable, may be said to be all but confirmed by the early belief in its accuracy, and by the reverence entertained by the inhabitants for the living tree, facts testified by the singular displeasure exhibited by them at the time of its removal. One lady's veneration for the memorial took a curious form in the preservation of the juice of its fruit in a vial that was believed to have been hermetically sealed, but a few expiring drops are all that now remain of the cherished liquid.

No written or printed record of Shakespeare's mulberry-tree has been discovered of a date previously to its extirpation, but there is a story, resting on the testimony of a very old man, that Sir Hugh Clopton entertained friends under it about the year 1744. This statement has been repeated in many works with slight variations, but the only good authority for it appears to be an unpublished letter from Malone to Davenport, dated in April, 1788, in which he says,—"old Mr. Macklin the player, who is now playing with wonderful vigour in the eighty-eighth year of his age, informs me that Mr. Garrick and he paid a visit to Stratford about the year 1744, and were hospitably entertained by Sir Hugh Clopton, then a very old gentleman; his memory, however, is by no means accurate." Malone, referring to the tree in another part of the same letter, adds,—"old Mr. Macklin says he was entertained under it by one of the Clopton family in 1744." It has also been stated that Delane the actor was in company with Garrick and Macklin on the occasion; Ireland's Views, 1795, p. 201. Then there is the testimony of Jordan saying that "the mulberry-tree in the garden of New Place, planted by Shakespeare, was grown to a very large size, with wide spreading boughs that shaded many yards of ground, under which were placed benches to sit on in the shade, and which I have heard Sir Hugh Clopton took great delight in shewing to the nobility and gentry whose curiosity excited them to visit the last memorial of immortal Shakespeare," MS. at Stratford-on-Avon, repeated in nearly the same words in other adversaria by the same writer. There appears to be little doubt of the fact that Sir Hugh Clopton, who, as is known from the evidence of Theobald, took an interest

in the traditions respecting New Place, valued the tree on account of its having been planted by the great dramatist. Thomas Sharp, the relic-carver, in a declaration made upon oath shortly before his death in 1799, asserted,—"that I was personally acquainted with Sir Hugh Clopton, knight, barrister-at-law and one of the Heralds-at-Arms, who was son of Sir John Clopton, knight, that purchased a certain messuage or house near the Chapel in Stratford, called the New Place, of the executors of Lady Elizabeth Barnard, and grand-daughter of Shakespear; and that I have often heard the said Sir Hugh Clopton solemnly declare that the mulberry-tree which growed in his garden was planted by Shakespear, and he took pride in shewing it to and entertaining persons of distinction whose curiosity excited them to visit the spot known to be the last residence of the immortal bard." The story told by the Vicar of Stratford-on-Avon in 1790 is also worth giving. "The Rev. Mr. Davenport," observes Malone, "informs me that Hugh Taylor, who is now (1790) eighty-five years old, and an alderman of Warwick, says, he lived when a boy at the next house to New Place; that his family had inhabited the house for almost three hundred years; that it (the fact of Shakespeare planting the tree) was transmitted from father to son during the last and the present century; that this tree, of the fruit of which he had often eaten in his younger days, some of its branches hanging over his father's garden, was planted by Shakespeare; and that, till this was planted, there was no mulberry-tree in that neighbourhood;—Mr. Taylor adds that he was frequently when a boy at New Place, and that this tradition was preserved in the Clopton family as well as in his own," Life of Shakespeare, ed. 1790, p. 118. There was a family of the name of Taylor living in the early part of the eighteenth century at the house now known as the Shakespeare Hotel, the yard of which adjoins the north-west corner of the New Place Great Garden; so that, unless the old man's recollection of the site was imperfect, there were at that time two mulberry-trees on the Shakespeare estate. His statement, that the one planted by the great dramatist was the first that had been seen in the locality, may be more implicitly relied upon.

The tree was cut down in the year 1758 (MS. Mal. 40), and, within a few months after its removal, tobacco-stoppers made of its wood were publicly sold as Shakespearean relics by one Moody, a toy-seller at Birmingham; Hull's Select Letters, 1778, i. 251. The gift of one of these relics, made by Percy through Shenstone to a mutual friend in 1759, was the occasion of a foolish hoax, the present being accompanied with a fictitious correspondence respecting the tree. There can, therefore, be no doubt that, very soon after it was felled, it was known as Shakespeare's mulberry-tree and that relics made from it were exposed for sale. It may be observed, in confirmation of these

facts, that in the next year, 1760, the Corporation presented an inkstand made of the wood to the Steward of the Court of Record, who thus expressed his thanks in a letter to the Town-Clerk,—"I really want words to express the sense I have of this great instance of regard which the Corporation of Stratford have honoured me with by their Chamberlain;—I do not know any present that could have been so agreeable to me, not only as a testimony of respect to me from the Corporation, which I shall always pride myself upon, but also as it falls in with what, if I had known how to have wished, I should most certainly have wished for;—the standish of Shakspeare's planting is the fittest ornament for an hermitage." A person named Sharp obtained a large quantity of the wood, and his original bill, dated in 1760, against the Corporation for the portions supplied on this and on some other similar occasion, is preserved in their archives.

Amongst the visitors to the poet's native town in the same year, 1760, was a lady who, after quoting in a letter the epitaph on Shakespeare's monument, that part of it referring to "envious death," proceeds to say, —"death, however, in taking Shakespear from the world so early, is, I think, far outdone by a man now living in or near this town; for there was till lately the house in which Shakespear lived and a mulberry-tree of his planting, the house large, strong and handsome, the tree so large that it would shade the grass plat in your garden, which I think is more than twenty yards square, and supply the whole town with mulberries every year;—as the curiosity of this house and tree brought much fame and more company and profit to the town, this man, on some disgust, has pulled the house down so as not to leave one stone upon another, and cut down the tree and piled it as a stack of firewood, to the great vexation, loss and disappointment of the inhabitants;—however, an honest silversmith bought the whole stack of wood, and now makes many odd things of this wood for the curious." These evidences show that relics from the tree were highly esteemed almost immediately after its destruction. There was a tradition to the effect that Sharp merely bought the remains for firewood, and that, shortly after the purchase, one of the logs being on the fire, a visitor suggesting the profit that could have been made by converting it into saleable relics, the owner immediately took the hint and snatched away the piece that was burning. This anecdote was related to me in 1863 by Thomas Gibbs, who entered life as one of Sharp's assistants, and so had an opportunity of being well-informed on the subject. The fact seems to be that Gastrell himself retained one or more of the best portions of the tree, and if he allowed Sharp, as he probably did, to take away the remainder at an ordinary waste price, it is evident that it was not long before the purchaser discovered the commercial importance of his bargain. Some years afterwards the latter was accused of having

used fictitious wood, and the report was deemed of sufficient moment to be contradicted in his formal death-bed affidavit, in which he states that Gastrell "cut down the mulberry-tree and cleft it as firewood, when *the greatest part of it* was purchased by me, the said Thomas Sharp, who employed one John Luckman to convey it to my own premises, where I have worked it into many curious toys and usefull articles from the same." It may be added that notices of mulberry relics dated previously to the negociations for the Jubilee of 1769 are exceedingly rare, but that afterwards they are as plenty as blackberries. A history of these relics might be compiled at great length, but would hardly be of interest to any but the owners of such memorials.

Sir Hugh Clopton, who resided at New Place during the first half of the last century, died in 1751, and in 1756 the estate was sold by his representatives to the Rev. Francis Gastrell, who, in 1759, pulled the residence then on the site of Shakespeare's house down to the ground. Shortly before the removal of that building, the new proprietor had felled the mulberry-tree to the great annoyance of the inhabitants of the town. The late R. B. Wheler tells us that he recollects his father saying that, when a boy, he assisted in breaking Gastrell's windows in revenge for the fall of the tree, which latter act, however, may be accounted for without attaching willful conduct to its impetuous owner. Several accounts agree in stating that it had attained a great magnitude with overhanging boughs, the trunk being in a state of decay, and indeed it is most probable that a tree of a century and a half's growth would have been of a very considerable size, the mould of Stratford being peculiarly favourable to the luxuriant growth of the mulberry. If planted at all near the house, its boughs would certainly have overshadowed some of the rooms at the back. Davies, in his Life of Garrick, the first edition of which appeared in 1780, expressly asserts that "the mulberry-tree planted by the poet's own hand became an object of dislike to this tasteless owner of it because it overshadowed his window, and rendered the house, as he thought, subject to damps and moisture." Here is one plausible reason given for the removal, and there may have been another that has not been recorded in the evidences of decay having convinced Gastrell that more than a transitory preservation was an impossibility. It would seem, at all events, that he was not indifferent to the poetical association, for that he kept relics of it in his own hands may be inferred from the circumstance of his widow having presented one to the Lichfield Museum. In a catalogue of that museum, ed. 1786, is the following entry,—"an horizontal section of the stock of the mulberry-tree planted by Shakespear at Stratford-upon-Avon; this curiosity was presented to the museum by Mrs. Gastrel, August 19th, 1778; it is six inches diameter," the last word being an obvious error, the writer meaning six inches in thickness.

The statement made by Davies is rendered probable by the fact that the mulberry-tree was situated in the garden at the back of New Place, the one near the house. One Charles Oakes, in an affidavit made in a lawsuit in 1807, supported by recollections of Stratford extending to the period of Gastrell's residence there, says that the garden which was opposite the vicar's northern wall, the latter near the Chapel and in Chapel Lane, "was called the Shakespeare Garden, being the garden on the north side of the lane, and so called from the mulberry-tree planted by Shakespeare growing therein." At this time its site had been generally forgotten, and most people took it for granted that the tree now in the Great Garden was in the situation of the old one. In a plan of Stratford made in 1802 the "spot on which grew Shakespeare's mulberry" is marked as being in that garden, but apparently at some little distance westward from the present tree. There is evidence of what was the local belief only twenty years after it was cut down, in a paper accompanying a letter from the Rev. Richard Jago, vicar of Snitterfield, to the Town-clerk of Stratford, written in 1778, in which he gives an extract from a pretended work entitled, Acts and Monuments of the Fairies, consisting of a decree from King Oberon to his loving fairy subjects respecting their revels held in the poet's garden,—"and whereas by the wilful and malicious destruction of the said mulberry-tree, as before recited, and other damage at New Place, late the mortal residence of the said William Shakespear of immortal memory, the sports and recreations of our good subjects have been grievously disturbed and interrupted; now we, taking the same into our serious consideration, have ordered and ordained, and by these presents do order and ordain, that the said sports and recreations formerly kept and held by our good people under the said mulberry-tree *do forthwith cease at the place where the said mulberry-tree stood*, and that from henceforth they be duely celebrated and observed with accustomed rites *in the piece of ground next thereunto adjoining*, being part or parcel of the terrestrial estate of the said William Shakespear, and now belonging to our beloved William Hunt, of whose affection for us and our people we have undoubted assurance, as likewise of his care to cultivate the same with all manner of productions agreeable to us, and to cause the same to be laid in proper places with clean and close-binding gravel, and the grass thereof to be neatly and frequently mowed for the better accommodation of our good subjects in celebrating the said rites; and our royal will and pleasure further is that *a part of the said ground lying nearest to the river Avon, and appropriated hereby to the celebration of the said rites*, shall henceforth be called Fairy Lawn, and that a fair pedestal or tablet of stone shall be erected in the centre of the said lawn, and an inscription, recording our affection and regard for the said William Shakespear, and our determination herein, engraven thereon." This document,

written by a person well acquainted with the locality for the amusement of one who must have been familiar with all the provincial testimony on the subject, furnishes conclusive evidence that the original tree was in the smaller garden. The one now in the Great Garden has been pronounced to have been raised from a scion of Shakespeare's tree, but this opinion is more than doubtful. Enquiries have not succeeded in tracing its existence previously to William Hunt's tenancy, some considerable time after the removal of the older tree, and the late R. B. Wheler, who was better acquainted with the subject than any one else, distinctly asserts that—"it is well known that neither of these trees (that at New Place and one in Old Town), nor that growing in the Lion garden, nor any other reported as such, ever sprung from Shakespeare's tree;—many people are willing enough to affirm their own as a scion from the celebrated tree, but unfortunately their tales are foolish and improbable when examined."

The Jubilee of 1769, mentioned in the preceding account, was the name given to a series of entertainments at Stratford that were devised and arranged in that year by Garrick, a celebrated actor of the day, under the ostensible pretence of doing honour to Shakespeare. And the great poet was dignified in this fashion.—The opening of the celebration having been duly announced in early morn by a powder cannonade, the lady visitors were serenaded in rotation by young men attired in fancy costume, and when everybody had thus been thoroughly aroused, Garrick was presented by the Corporation with a medal and a wand, both made from relics of the famous mulberry-tree, bells and cannon loudly uniting to proclaim the acceptance of the gifts. Then there were public feasts, more serenading, an oratorio at the church, elaborate processions, a masquerade, balls, illuminations, fireworks, horse-races, and an unlimited supply of drummers. In the midst, however, of all this tomfoolery, the presiding genius of the show recited an ode in praise of the great dramatist, that achievement and some of the gaieties taking place in a large wooden theatre that had been erected for the occasion on the Bancroft.

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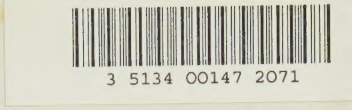
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